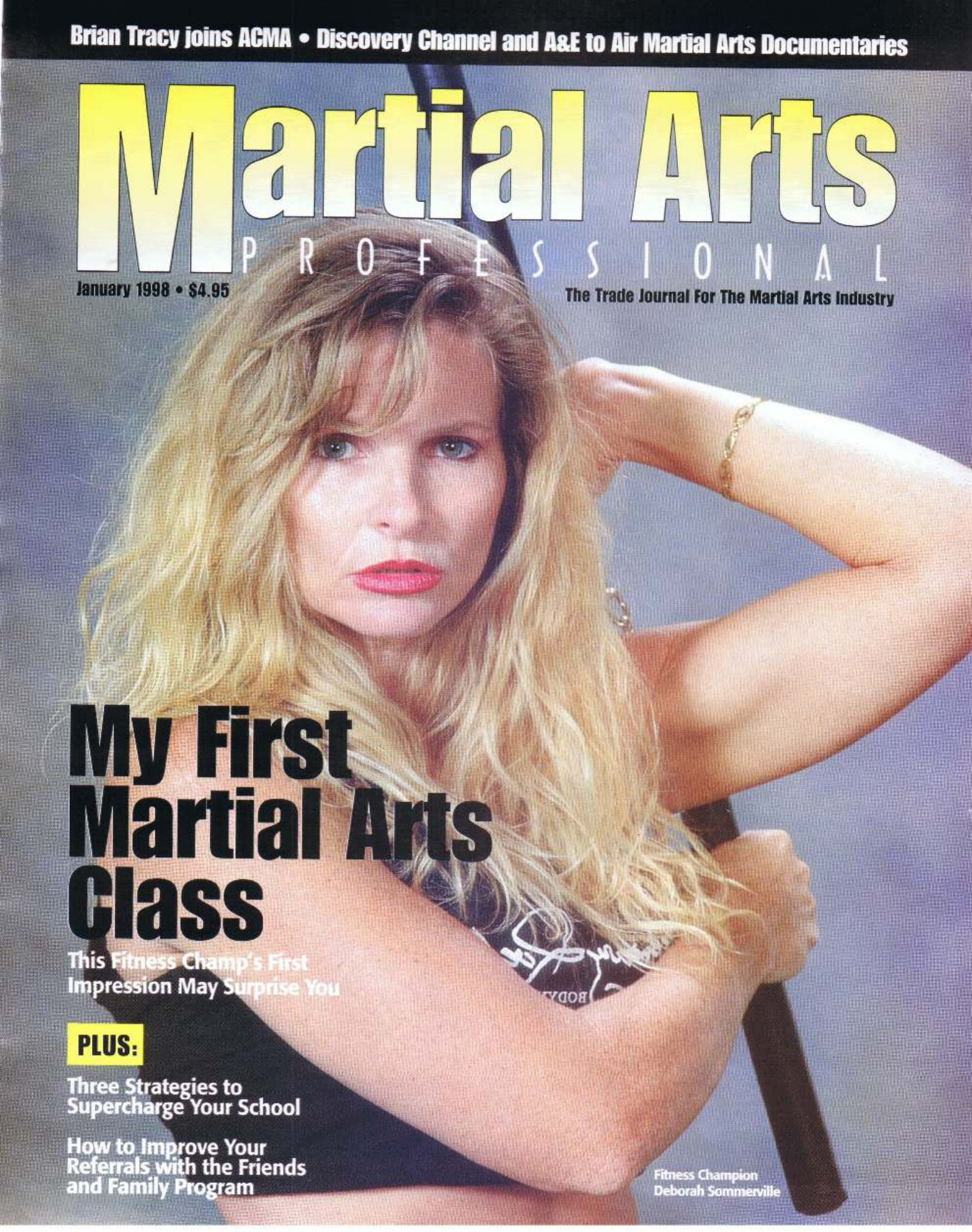
Brian Tracy joins ACMA • Discovery Channel and A&E to Air Martial Arts Documentaries

Martial Arts PROFESSIONAL

January 1998 • $4.95

The Trade Journal For The Martial Arts Industry



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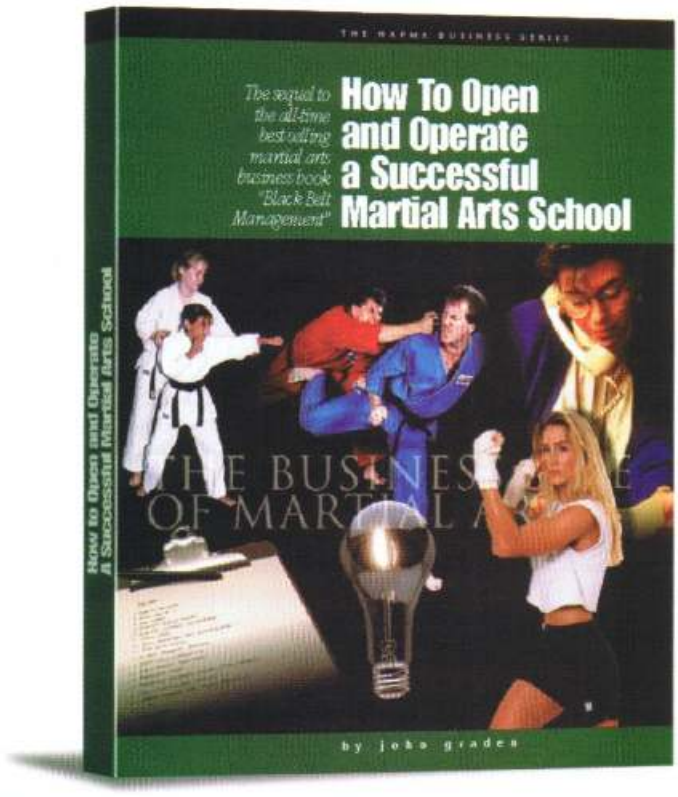
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BY JOHN GRADEN

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- Design and layout your school for maximum efficiency and return
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- Limit liability
- Structure exams for high quality students
- Schedule for growth
- Choose a billing company
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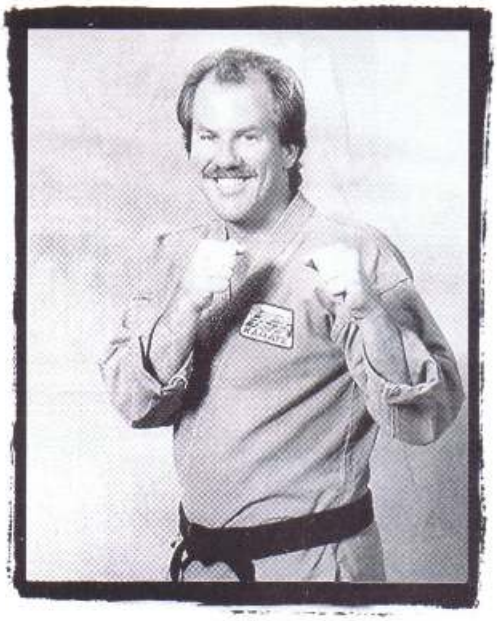
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AS I SEE IT

letter from the publisher



Turning a Negative into a Positive

A New Jersey assemblywoman is fighting to push a bill that would regulate martial arts instruction. To quote from the proposal, "The commission shall review all aspects of the martial arts and develop recommendations concerning instruction in the various martial arts with emphasis on safety standards, standards for instruction and the means of implementing those standards. ..."

If this was just about the use of contracts or cash outs, it would be easier to understand. But this is not about money, it's about regulating teaching.

Even if you don't live in Jersey, you have to view this as a very serious situation. This is the third attempt in New Jersey to create this kind of commission. It's clear that there is a political contingent who feel that martial arts should be government regulated. Indeed, other states have had a number of similar legislative attempts. Once one state gets such a law passed, it will be much easier for others to follow.

Unless we want the government determining what and who should be teaching martial arts, we have to take action. First, we have to make sure this legislation is not passed in New Jersey or anywhere else. Second, and most important of all, we must police ourselves by continuously upgrading our teaching standards.

In most instruction-based industries a certification is looked upon as the standard for professionals. In aerobics, instructors undertake certifications in order to teach. In scuba diving, you can become certified in scuba, but you also need a second certification to become an instructor. Even the PGA has strict instructional courses required to become a golf pro. In our industry, the rank of black belt has always been assumed to be a teaching certificate. Clearly, as we all well know, it is not.

The rank of black belt is an indication of someone who has spent time learning the martial arts. It is *not* an indication that the same person has any training in teaching. The black belt has failed as a standard of teaching skill. There is an estimated 18,000+ schools nationwide today and more opening everyday. The vast majority of these schools have 50% children.

With the huge number of children involved and the negative publicity generated by the arts about violence in the media, government regulation is a *very real possibility*. Our only defense is to develop our own methods of educating instructors on professional standards of teaching.

"Martial Arts Professional" is dedicated to creating such a program.

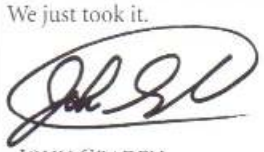
We recognize that the very word "certification" raises the hair on most martial artist's neck. Few words have been thrown around and abused as much as "rank certification." However, what we're creating is a program of consistent professional education, regardless of style. This program will teach an instructor how to run a safe, professional class. It will not be involved in your ranking structure, your business, or your style. It will be just as effective and important for the most traditional schools as it is for the most eclectic. The program will simply provide your instructors with the basic and universal fundamentals of teaching, communication and safety that all instructors should understand.

The foundation of the program is the American Council on Martial Arts (ACMA). The ACMA will be comprised of Sports Psychologists, Child Psychologists, Physiologists and fitness experts who are also involved in the martial arts. This program will be a standard that will assist consumers in choosing a school and help our industry regulate itself without the politics of style, organization or the government.

Certification revolutionized and legitimized the aerobic industry. In every article on choosing an aerobic instructor, the recommendation is always to make sure they're certified. Most fitness clubs will not hire an instructor unless he or she is certified. That's the standard this industry needs as we move into the new century.

The ACMA Certification Program will debut at the *Martial Arts Professional* convention in June 1998. Until then, we will keep you updated on the progress and personnel involved in the ACMA each month in the pages of *MAPro*.

Our research shows there are thousands of instructors who will immediately recognize the potential for good this program promises. We also know that universal acceptance of this idea within the industry is a long road. However, most worthy goals of this magnitude, like a journey of a thousand miles, starts with a single step. We just took it.



JOHN GRADEN
Publisher

Vol. 3, No. 1

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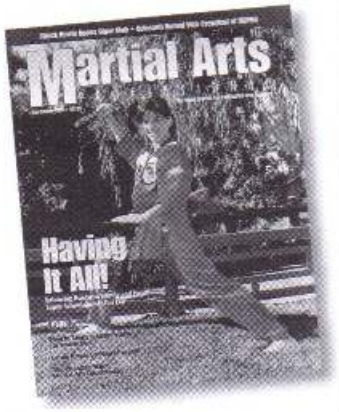
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

feedback from our readers



Brian Tracy in ACMA

Dear Mr. Graden: It was a real pleasure meeting you at the Hyatt in Tampa last week. I very much enjoyed our opportunity to talk and I really hope that our video interview turns out to be exactly what you were looking for.

With regard to being on the "Board Of Advisors" for the "American Council on Martial Arts," I would be pleased to accept your invitation. My first love has always been in the martial arts. I will be pleased to contribute any way that I can.

This is a wonderful business to be in, and it's wonderful to be in this business! I wish you the very best of continued success in everything you do.

If I can be of any help to you in the future, please give me a call.

BRIAN TRACY
Brian Tracy International
Solana Beach, California

40% More Students and Doubled My Income

I've just completed studying your new book [*How to Open and Operate a Successful Martial Arts School*]. It really reinforces your material in the first book [*Black Belt Management*]. I was amazed at your personal stories about doing what you love versus something you hate for someone else.

It is interesting to know that you thought you would never make a living having a martial arts school. I was told that you could not make a living by owning a school, but I trusted my instincts and now I would not trade it for the world.

With the application of many of your innovative ideas, my school is doing better than ever. Just since March 1997, I've gained 40% more students, have doubled my monthly income, have the best attendance, the best attitudes, the highest retention, the highest morality—and the most fun with building it! It gets better every day and the quality of training has not decreased but increased.

I thought you would like to hear that your ideas do work and I am a supporter of your cause. If you ever consider having area reps of some sort, for any volunteer support as a means of future expansion, please keep me in mind, for I believe the strength of the many will overcome the strength of the few.

Congrats on your new book. It has certainly inspired me to go forward into the future. Please keep up the good work. I'm proud to be a part of NAPMA.

MARK DiNINO
via American Online

Heartfelt Thanks

Yesterday I took an information call from a gentleman who has "wanted to train in Bruce Lee's Jun Fan since childhood." When I attempted to schedule an appointment for him, he informed me that the time would conflict with his aerobics class.

However, I suggested to him that if he's wanted so long to train in a martial art, then he should take advantage of my invitation to join us. I also suggested to him that he miss the aerobics class for one night and take our Cardiokickin' class instead.

Without NAPMA, I would not have (1) developed the confidence to overcome his objection; and (2) been able to suggest Cardiokickin' as an alternative.

Thank you very much.

DWIGHT D. WOODS
Miami, FL

Music To Our Ears

We would like to take this moment to thank you and all of the staff at *Martial Arts Professional* for their outstanding support and belief in our music programs. We feel strongly about your organization and are proud to be represented in your publication.

We have been advertising in your magazine and have had tremendous results! We have actually sold out of music titles within the first month. This is something we did not expect, but are happy about. We now prepare each month for the storm of calls that come around the third week of the month due to your magazine.

We are happy to report that we provide hundreds of NAPMA members with music for their Cardio Karate classes.

BRIAN M. HOWE
B & K Howe Music Service
Rohnert Park, California

The Vision Is Awesome!

Your editorial, "How's Your Vision Holding Up?," made me realize how fortunate I am. You stated the definition of freedom and the American Dream is to do what you love to do for a living. I have been fortunate enough for this to happen twice in my life. For the past three years have owned what has become a very successful martial arts school on Long Island, NY.

Prior to this, I owned a chain of musical instrument stores throughout Long Island for 17 years. Being into music all my life, the music business was a dream come true. Throughout the 1980s, the music business was very successful and provided my family with a comfortable lifestyle.

I'd been training for a while and had a 2nd-degree black belt. Through the encouragement and guidance of several industry professionals, such as my instructor and professional consulting firms, coupled with my previous business experience, I was able to make my dream come true again!

Yes, the widescale success in the martial arts industry is a professional evolution whose time has come!

How's the vision holding up? IT'S AWESOME! ! !

TOM LOVARCO
American Black Belt Academy
Massapequa Park, NY ■

INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

CORCORAN TO CO-AUTHOR GROUNDBREAKING ACMA MANUAL



ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA—The ACMA's (American Council on Martial Arts) has signed a major pact with renowned martial arts author John Corcoran of Los Angeles, California, to co-write the *ACMA Certification Manual* with *MAPro* Publisher John Graden. The "Certification Manual" is the key project the ACMA will implement in its attempt to revolutionize the teaching methods in the martial arts field.

Corcoran has authored six books to date, all but one with major New York publishers, which have collectively sold over a quarter-million copies worldwide. His pioneering credits include some of the most highly-acclaimed reference books in the martial arts field—*The Original Martial Arts Encyclopedia, The Martial Arts Sourcebook* and *The Martial Arts Companion*. In addition, over the past 25 years he has served as an editor or founding editor of almost every influential martial arts magazine in the industry. Corcoran is currently Senior Editor of *Martial Arts Professional*.

The "ACMA Certification Manual" will be composed of individual chapters divided into four major categories: The Art of Teaching; Physiology; Psychology; and Risk Management (Legal). The chapters, overall, will teach an instructor how to run a safe, professional class by learning the basic and universal fundamentals of teaching, communication and safety that all instructors should understand and apply (see John Graden's column, "As I See It," in this issue).

Corcoran's first order of business will be to help create an unprecedented, for martial arts, ACMA Board of Advisors — composed of experts, some quite renowned, who will contribute their particular expertise to the written chapters of the Certification Manual. The first member already recruited at press time for the Board of Advisors is prominent Motivational Speaker Brian Tracy, who's also a karate black belt and one-time karate school manager. Mr. Tracy will provide his expertise in the chapters that deal with motivating students as well as self-motivation for instructors themselves.

Said Corcoran, "I had been under the impression that, after twenty-five years in this business, there were no further martial arts books of importance left for me to write. I was wrong. 'The ACMA Certification Manual' could very well be the most important book I've worked on to date.

"If this manual impacts the industry the way we think it will, it will forever change and improve the way martial arts are taught to the masses in this country, and later, throughout most of the Western world. This could very well be the single most significant project that takes our industry a quantum leap forward into the Twenty-First century." ■

MACHO PRODUCTS INTRODUCES MILLENNIUM 2000 HEAD GEAR



Product Announcement:

SEBASTIAN, FL—With the release of their 1997/1998 martial arts catalog, Macho Products introduces a new head gear to the industry, the Millennium 2000 (a.k.a., M2000). This cutting-edge technology in sparring equipment offers the industry a totally new product utilizing an innovative manufacturing process and new types of foams.

This one-of-a-kind, molded one-piece technology represents a new fusion process that combines three types of foam. The inner foam nearest the head is soft and comfortable. In addition, the M2000 head gear is lighter than standard dipped-foam equipment by as much as 25%. The middle layer of high-density foam protects the head, dispersing the shock of inadvertent sparring hits. The top layer of foam provides a tough outer shell for durability.

For the first time, according to Macho, martial arts head gear is lighter, and sparring is cooler. The M2000 offers a smooth, clean, contemporary look and is available in five distinct designs: Classic Red, Jet Black, Bright White, Black/White Swirl, and Red/Black Swirl. ■

INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

GUATEMALA KARATE TEACHERS NABBED IN KIDNAP CASES

GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA—Three brothers who gave private karate lessons to rich, security-conscious Guatemalans may have used their trusted positions to gather information on targets for kidnapping gangs, officials said on Monday.

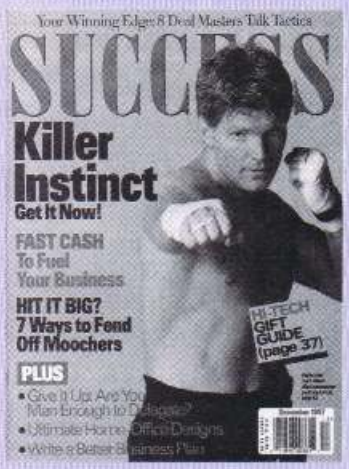
"Three karate instructors were among those arrested" in a weekend police operation in early November that rounded up suspects in 13 kidnappings, Prosecutor General Hector Perez told a news conference.

Kidnapping for ransom is common in Guatemala but victims rarely report the crime because corrupt police often collaborate with kidnapping gangs. Wealthy Guatemalans, ever-vigilant against potential kidnappers, protect themselves with heavily-armed bodyguards, armored cars and martial arts training.

But one family of karate trainers was really the enemy, according to *Siglo XXI* newspaper. *Siglo XXI* wrote that arrested brothers Manuel, Hamilton and Job Montt Solorzano taught karate in the capital's most prestigious martial arts school and gave private lessons in the homes of several families that later suffered kidnappings. ■

MAPRO CITED IN SUCCESS MAG

NEW YORK, NY—*Success* magazine's December issue featured a cover story on how some small business owners credit their martial arts training in providing them with the skills of success. In the primary sidebar, readers were prompted to call The National Association of Professional Martial Artists (NAPMA) to find a good martial arts school. In the same sidebar, *Martial Arts Professional* magazine's listing of the top schools in America (January 1996) was noted with the names and locations of four of the top five schools.



Parenting magazine and *Walt Disney* magazine also have martial arts based features running soon that include NAPMA and *MAPro* as primary sources for industry information on choosing a school and the state of the industry. ■

CORPORATION CLOSES FIVE SCHOOLS TO MAKE WAY FOR TV SHOW



Pat Morita, shown here with MAPro publisher John Graden, will star in "The Adventures of Kanga Roddy"

HAYWARD, CA—American Champion Entertainment, Inc. (Nasdaq:ACEI) announced recently it has completed a planned streamlining of its karate studio operations as part of a strategy to focus its resources on its core business—the production of a 13-part television series, "Adventures of Kanga Roddy," aimed at school children ages 4 to 7.

The show, which stars Pat Morita of *Karate Kid* fame, Jennifer Montana and Karen Lott (wives of football stars Joe Montana and Ronnie Lott, respectively), and an ethnically-diverse cast of children, features a colorful seven-foot-tall kangaroo named "Kanga Roddy" as the lead character. Using songs, dances and dazzling, non-violent martial arts, Kanga Roddy inspires and teaches children about values such as respect, compassion, humility and honesty.

"The closing of five less profitable karate studios in Northern California, which have been operated by our subsidiary, America's Best Karate, will improve the company's cash position," said Anthony K. Chan, American Champion's president and chief executive officer.

"This strategy, which was discussed in our prospectus for our company's initial public offering (IPO), will allow us to concentrate our efforts on producing a top-quality children's show and securing additional television stations to air the series.

Added Chan, "We are pleased to report production is on schedule, and on budget. It will debut in April 1998, and is expected to air on television stations nationwide, with a total viewership of more than 40-million households."

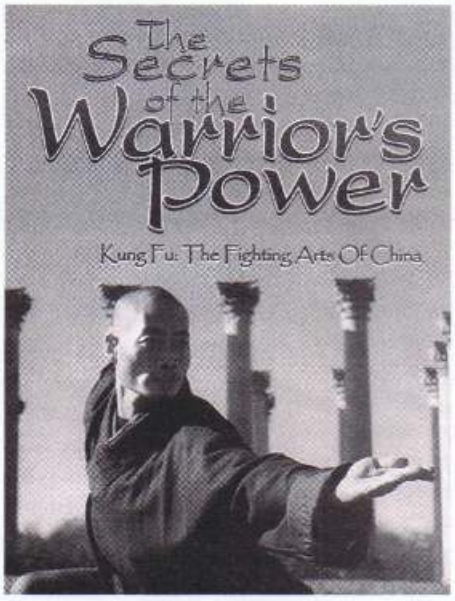
American Champion Entertainment completed its IPO on July 30, 1997. For information contact Anthony Chan (510) 782-8168. ■

INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

DISCOVERY CHANNEL TO AIR MARTIAL ARTS KUNG-FU PROGRAM FOR FIRST TIME

Strong Ratings Will Mean More To Follow



"The Secrets of the Warrior's Power," a dramatic, one-hour documentary which focuses on Shaolin kung-fu and the traditional fighting arts of China, will be premiering on the Discovery Channel on Sunday night, December 28th at 10 PM (EST). It is the first program of its kind aired by the acclaimed educational channel, which acknowledged that the program seemed like a "natural fit" for its audience.

The program also includes rare photos and action clips of Bruce Lee, beautifully filmed demonstrations, archival footage from the Shaolin Temple and a strong dose of the age-old values the martial arts are known for.

Special videocassette copies—the "director's cut—of the show are available from Fox Lorber/Winstar Home Video for $19.95 by calling 1-800-414-1690. ■

THE VERDICT ON THE SUMMER OF '97

In a November telephone poll of 73 martial arts school owners from around the country, 34 said that business was better during the summer of 1997 than the summer of 1996. 36 said that business was better in the summer of 1996 than in the summer of 1997. Since the interviews were part of a random poll, there is no information on the locations of these schools. 3 school owners said business was the same. Source: National Association of Professional Martial Artists ■

DON "THE DRAGON" WILSON ON "MOESHA"



HOLLYWOOD, CA—On Tuesday, November 11, popular martial arts film star Don "The Dragon" Wilson returned to television for a guest-star spot on the hit TV show "Moesha."

In the show, in exchange for use of the Den as a movie set, Wilson teaches a self-defense class to the ladies.

Wilson launched his Hollywood career on television, as a regular on soap, "General Hospital." ■

1998 CARDIO KARATE SEMINAR GOES FULL DAY

ST. PETERSBURG, FL—The Cardio Karate Instructor Certification program has expanded for 1998. The program will now be segmented into two sections.

The first section will be an interactive "How To Teach A Cardio Karate Class," featuring a number of new innovations. After a lunch break, students will be prepped for a written exam based upon a new version of the Cardio Karate Certification Manual.

Registration is $99 for NAPMA members and $149 for Non-NAPMA members. Call 800-973-6734 to register.

The following dates are already filling up:

Jan. 4 - Miami Beach, FL
Westin Resort Miami Beach
Miami, Florida
305-532-3600

Jan. 18 - Las Vegas, NV
The Orleans
Las Vegas, Nevada
702-365-7111

Feb. 8 - Atlanta, GA
The Westin Hotel
Atlanta, Georgia
770-762-7676

Mar. 1- Phoenix, AZ
Phoenix Civic Plaza
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602-262-6225

INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

A&E AIRS LANDMARK TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY

LOS ANGELES, CA—"The Martial Arts," the first two-hour documentary on the subject to air on Sunday night primetime TV, will be broadcast on February 1, 1998 on cable's A&E Television.

The two-hour program, narrated by George Takei (Sulu of "Star Trek"), is the biggest, most prestigious and most expensive martial arts documentary in history.

The documentary features interviews and performances by a legion of America's elite masters, champions, historians, authors and experts who are involved in an extremely wide variety of arts and styles.

Just some of the interviewees include: Rorion Gracie and the legendary Wally Jay (jiu-jitsu); Stephen Hayes (ninjutsu); Jhoon Rhee and some of his famous Congressmen who are his martial arts students (taekwondo); Joe Corley (American karate); John Graden (*MAPro* Publisher) and Kathy Long (kickboxing).



"The Martial Arts" traces the martial arts evolution from antiquity to modern day. Included in the documentary are some of the more esoteric disciplines from around the world.

MAPro Senior Editor John Corcoran says, "There has never before been a documentary of this magnitude produced on the martial arts, and it's important that A&E's broadcast receives big ratings. Impressive ratings could lead to more future documentaries of this caliber."

At press time, other significant events attached to "The Martial Arts" were rapidly developing. *MAPro* will keep its readers abreast of these and any other developments in the next issue.

NATIONAL MODEL SEARCH



ST. PETERSBURG, FL—If you (or a student or associate of yours) are a model and are interested in having your photo featured in national fitness and martial arts advertisements, posters and magazines, please consider submitting shots to Graden Media Group. We're looking for male and females of all ages.

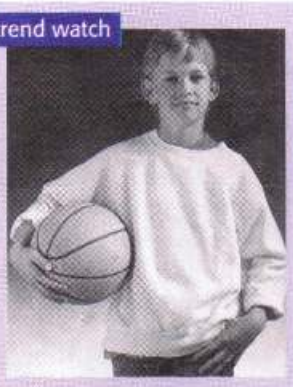
The submitted photos should be professionally shot. Martial arts poses and Cardio Karate "Sweat Chic" poses are preferred.

While there is no pay for these shots, you may have an instant national media campaign or magazine appearance to add to your portfolio.

If you're going to be in the Tampa Bay area and would like to be considered for a shoot in our studio, please submit a variety of photos for our review.

Send submissions to: Graden Media Group, 1362 86th Terrace North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702. ■

trend watch



Source: STARS 96 (Simmon's Teen Age Research Study)

SURVEY SHOWS MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ADVERTISING TO KIDS

According to *Kidscreen* magazine, here are the places where teens consider advertising effective in reaching them

	Males	Females
Before a movie at the theater	28.4%	27.8%
Before a movie on a videocassette	22.2%	20.6%
In a school newspaper or magazine	11%	11.6%
In posters at school	12.8%	12.2%
On TV news programs shown at school	13.2%	12%
On other TV programs shown at school	11.4%	9.5%
On or in classroom materials	12.5%	14%
On the World Wide Web	16.1%	13.8%
Through mail at home	18.8%	20%
Through free product samples	29.1%	40%
On billboards	22.4%	19.9%

ŌTOMIX Cartoon Character Martial Arts Tees!

Most Available in kids and adult sizes. 100% cotton.

TWEETY! WILE E.! TAZ! BUGS! & THE WHOLE PEANUTS GANG!



The Peanuts Line Up
Adult sizes: M-L-XL
#302PNMA $19.00



Bugs, Taz, Wile E. Martial Arts Tee
Kids sizes: S-M-L
#K302BTWM $18.00
Adult sizes: M-L-XL
#302BTWMA $19.00



Tweety Martial Arts Tee
Kids sizes: S-M-L
#K302TWMA $18.00
Adult sizes: M-L-XL
#302TWMA $19.00

http://www.otomix.com



Bugs Kicks Taz Martial Arts Tee
Kids sizes: S-M-L
#K302BGTZ $18.00
Adult sizes: M-L-XL
#302BGTZ $19.00



Snoopy Martial Arts Tee
Kids sizes: S-M-L
#K302SPMA $18.00

Kids Kicking Pant
#K500 $25.00



Taz Martial Arts Tee
Kids sizes: S-M-L
#K302TZMA $18.00
Adult sizes: M-L-XL
#302TZMA $19.00



Elmo Martial Arts Tee
Kids sizes: S-M-L
#K302ELMA $18.00
Adult sizes: M-L-XL
#302ELMA $19.00



Wile E. Martial Arts Tee
Kids sizes: S-M-L
#K302WCMA $18.00
Adult sizes: M-L-XL
#302WCMA $19.00

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Confidence, persistence, and a commitment to the community helped Thomas Perry reestablish a small town's trust in martial arts after four local schools closed down

How One Instructor Overcame a Small Town's Distrust

By Bill Feltt

Thomas Perry crossed the city limits of the mostly white rural Illinois town of Taylorville with only the clothes on his back and no intentions of making martial arts his livelihood.

Talk around the table at a local diner, coincidentally owned by the landlord of his first school, gave him 90 days before packing it in. "People weren't willing to accept [a black instructor] at that time," Perry recalls.

Patience, and fulfilling some lofty goals—including training local students who brought home national championships—helped him overcome small-town prejudices, he says. He had to prove himself as a person, "show what it [taekwondo] had done for me."

Fourteen years later, he sits atop one of the biggest martial arts schools in central Illinois, which includes the capital of Springfield, Decatur and Champaign-Urbana, home of the Big 10 campus, University of Illinois.

Upon entering his school, a sign that reads "House of Discipline" hints at how Perry was able to overcome racial bias and mistrust of martial artists in general. Perry entered the scene in the wake of the departure of four other schools.

The message in the sign might provide a hint at how he managed to succeed big in this rural corn town, despite a mistrust of martial arts schools brought about by those four previous schools. One instructor even hightailed it soon after collecting payments for classes never given. It took discipline and a marketing strategy that fit well into the local business climate.

"You have to be an asset to the community," says Perry, a sixth-degree black belt taekwondo instructor, from his



Perry with his "Roll of black belts," to which he has recently added 40 names.

spacious split-level headquarters in sleepy Taylorville, population 11,400.

Nestled in the heart of central Illinois corn country roughly 100 miles north of St. Louis and 250 miles south of Chicago, Taylorville is the county seat of Christian County. Taylorville boasts a McDonald's, a Pizza Hut and, across from the courthouse on the square tucked between a family-owned jewelry store and the local newspaper, Perry's 6,000 square-feet-plus dojang (practice gym), one of the largest in Illinois, Perry says.

At his three schools—including schools that grew out of his small-town success in Springfield and Decatur—Perry has 350 active students. He just signed a five-year deal to stay where he's at in Taylorville. No small feat when you consider that Illinois' capital, Springfield, a city of 110,000, lies 30 miles north.

But before you head for the wide-open spaces, Perry recommends you have at least 10 years of teaching experience under your black belt. Perry says instructors looking at small communities should survey the area first. After all, the risks are great. While his school prospered, he watched other schools come and go like so much chaff blown off a hay wagon. Check out the environment. Then, plan on getting involved with the community over and above the business of martial arts. He, for example, belongs to the Optimist and Kiwanis Clubs and is very active in church functions.

Arrived with Just the Clothes on his Back

At the urging of a friend and fellow taekwondoist, Perry took over a struggling school, then located in an 800-square-foot storefront. He remembers demonstrating a flying kick in close quarters. He had to open the front door so, after touchdown, he could zip through it rather than crash through the glass door.

Perry came to Taylorville in 1983 with literally only the clothes on his back, after studying various forms of martial arts since the early 1970s. He had nowhere to sleep and crashed for months in the school. That wasn't his biggest problem. He had to overcome resistance left in the wake of the failure of the other martial arts schools.

First, Perry suggests you drop your ego at the city limits. Several local yokels tried to prove themselves by challenging him to show his stuff. At one demonstration a spectator became aggressive. Perry could probably have chosen to mash his face (which would have not exactly endeared him to the community to which he would later preach the non-violent side of the martial arts). Instead, he says, he simply evaded the tough guy, eventually exhausting him.

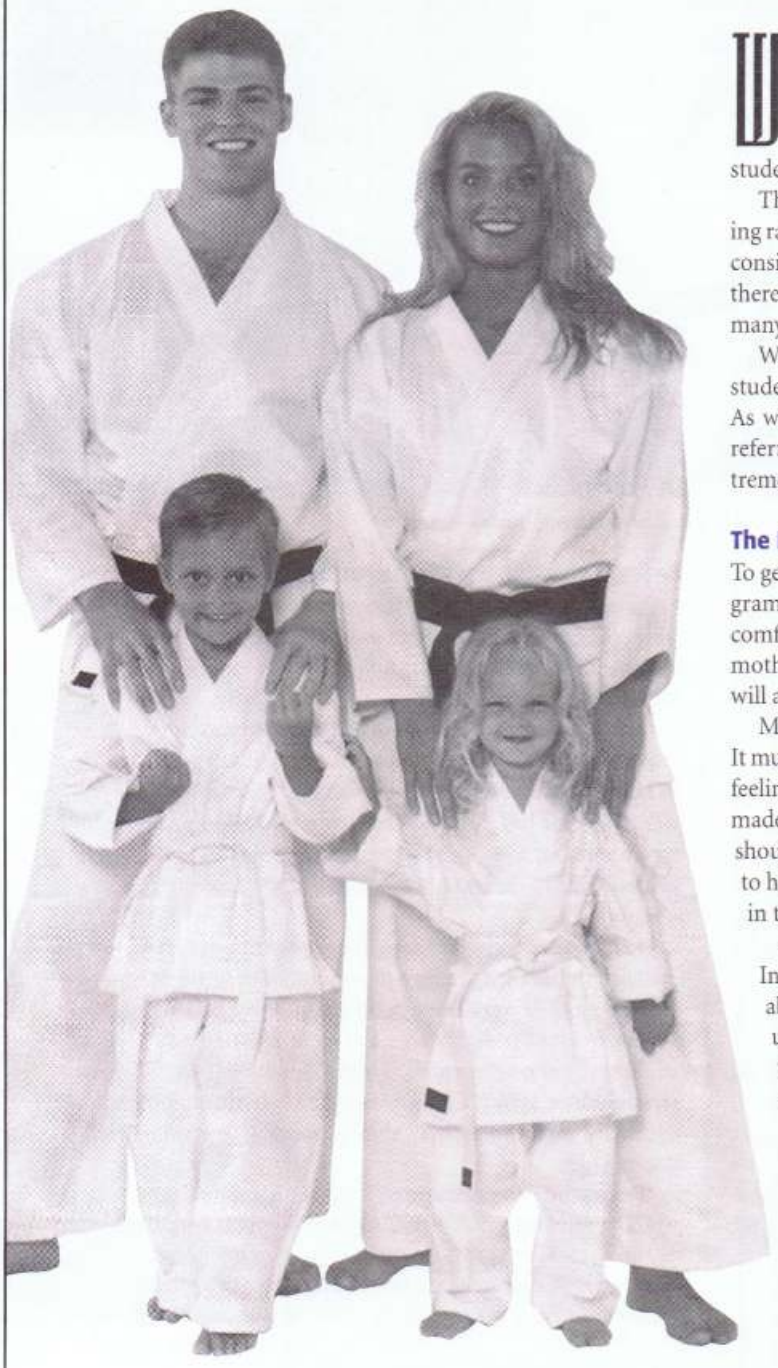
"I'm not here to prove myself," and neither should you, Perry says. The incident raised Perry's status in the eyes of the community and, years later, provided Perry with a new friend. (Seems the reformed lout, after serving a stretch in the pen for unrelated conduct, sought Perry out for lessons in taekwondo and humility.)

continued on page 18

by Scot Conway

Friends and Family Month

Low Cost Marketing At Its Best



Within a five-mile radius of the Guardian Kempo studio in San Diego, there are about a dozen competing schools teaching a variety of martial arts. With that kind of competition, there has to be a way to stand out to get new students.

The primary newspaper in the area has prohibitive advertising rates, and the smaller regional papers are largely unread and considered "throwaways" by most local advertisers. Of course, there's always the Yellow Pages, where schools can be one of as many as 100 or more schools listed.

When the advertising budget is limited, but the need for new students still exists, it takes a little creativity to generate leads. As with most businesses, the key is generating leads through referrals. They cost little, they are effective, and they can yield tremendous results.

The First Step

To generate leads by word of mouth, you must first have a program that will make people proud. You have to have a clean, comfortable-looking studio. That will attract the women and mothers. You must have adequate equipment for the class. That will attract the men.

More important than each of those, however, are the classes. It must be dynamic, exciting, and inspiring. Students must leave feeling like they had a good workout, learned something, and made progress. Students should feel proud of their studio. They should think it would be great for all their friends. They have to have a class they will feel great pride about when they bring in their friends and family.

As well, students need instructors they can take pride in. Instructors should be well-groomed, energetic, knowledgeable, insightful, friendly and open. No mother wants to sign up her precious child for a class with a mean-sounding teacher. Few adults want a class with someone who is intentionally trying to intimidate them. Students need to feel that they have instructors worth showing off to their friends.

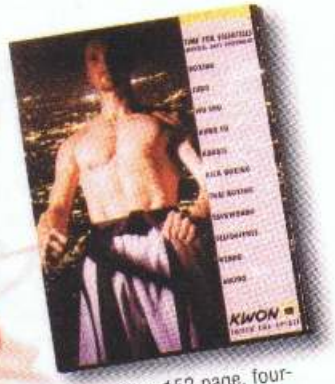
If you've got a friendly dojo in which parents feel comfortable, if you have dynamic classes that students enjoy and in which they learn, and if you are a person they would like their friends to meet, then you are ready for a special event.

continued on page 16

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Friends and Family—*continued from page 14.*

Friends and Family Month

A fairly simple way of getting leads is to have a "Friends and Family Month." A powerful way to do this is to offer your students a chance to bring friends or family members to enjoy the class for a month for a nominal fee. The fee should not be less than 25% of your normal class fee, and you should not give it away free. That which costs nothing has no value. You want the people to pay something for their lessons.

Guardian Kempo charges the "try-out students" $20 for the month. As an incentive to the students and families, we offer a $20 rebate to the family, or a weapon, as a reward for participating in Friends and Family Month. Students may receive bo-staves, escrima, bokken, or some other fairly inexpensive weapon as a reward. The rebate allows family members from the same household to attend for free, but since the family is still paying, the lessons still have value.

It is most effective when students are given invitations to hand out. The invitations must include the address and phone number of the studio. The Guardian Kempo invitations includes a message: "My instructor has authorized me to invite a few special people to join us for Friends and Family Month. I decided to invite you! So please come join me for a free introductory class at (day/date/time)."

Students fill out the name of the person they are inviting, the day, date and time they are invited, and the student signs it. All the rest of the information is pre-printed on the card.

An inexpensive way to make invitation cards is to make a quarter-sheet invitation and have them copied four to a sheet on cardstock, and then cut them. Using the front and back, there is plenty of room for all necessary information.

The students are responsible for being there when their guest arrives, and is also responsible for introducing the guest around. This ensures that the guest is comfortable, since his friend is handling the introductions, and he already knows someone will show him the ropes when he signs up. The student remains responsible for his friend for the class, helping him through the course lesson and helping with any protocols the dojo may have.

The instructor should edify the student. Comments like, "Hello, Steve! So you're Johnny's friend, huh? Great! Did you know Johnny is doing a fantastic job in his training! He is *so* sharp. Any friend of his is always welcome here!"

That makes the student look good, and the guest will feel like he wants to be praised like that, and he is more likely to sign up. Don't lie, though. Don't say how great Johnny's side kicks are *if they aren't*, but find something sincere that you can praise Johnny about in front of his friend.

Don't think that edification is just for kids. Adults like it, too. Women might be especially responsive, but men enjoy it, too. If you know "hot buttons," be sure to use them. If you know a student is particularly proud of the power he's learned to generate in your program, tell the guest how powerful he is. If you know a student is impressed that she's actually learning her spinning kick, tell the guest how proud you are of her efforts and performance.

We already know that when a guest is in the class, we should encourage and excite that guest. When you have several guests, it is important that *all of them* get a little special attention, but do not ignore the class! Observers will notice that you are only paying attention to new people, and they will get the message that you are only interested in selling lessons. Teach a good class! Give *all* your students and guests good value for the money they spend to be there.

After the end of the introductory class—the class in which the students helped their friends through the class—then sign them up for their introductory month at $20 (or whatever nominal fee you decided upon). You may encourage or require them to have a uniform, but it may actually be helpful to keep them in sweats for a while. It saves the student from feeling awkward about getting suited out, and it also reminds the introductory student that he has not signed up for lessons. . . yet.

One Week Later, Make Them An Offer

About a week into the program, you offer your regular program to the student (or mom or dad). Let them know that if they sign up by a certain date (the 15th or 20th), their $20 fee will be applied to enrollment. If you don't have a special enrollment fee, then you can apply it to the next month of lessons. The discount will encourage them to commit before the end of the month, and that commitment, once made, will help carry the student through to regular enrollment.

If you wait until the end of the month, then the student has everything for which they paid and they need to decide if they want to pay more to get more. If you ask *during* the month, then they already know that they plan to be there for the rest of the month anyway, so they are already in the mindset of "I'm going to keep coming" when you ask.

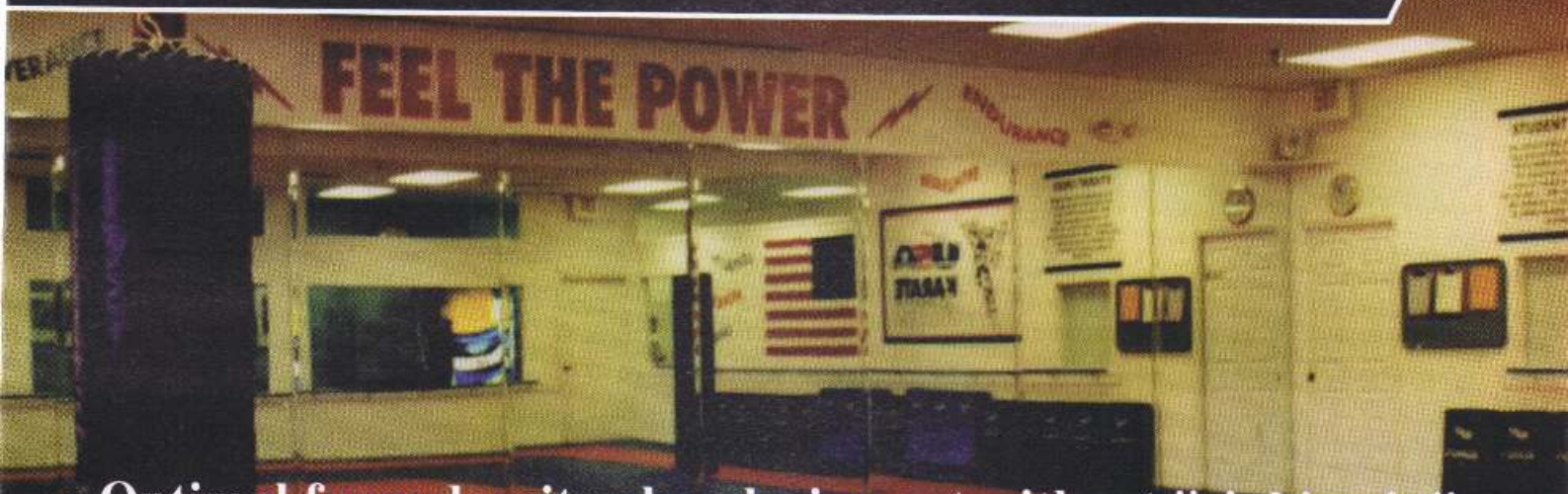
Be sure to ask. Don't hard sell, and don't push, but be absolutely, positively certain that you do ask. If you don't ask, don't expect to receive.

Once the student enrolls, then he gets his official uniform and belt. Now he is a real student and he has officially begun his martial arts training. Then the studio starts to earn money from that student. ■

Scot Conway is a 6th-dan who teaches Guardian Kempo Christian Martial Arts in San Diego. He is also an attorney, seminar instructor, businessman and the director of the Christian Martial Arts Foundation.

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This mural hangs in Perry's Taylorville facility has particular meaning. Besides being painted by his students over three months, the figures coincide with important years in Perry's life.

A Small Town's Distrust—*continued from page 13.*

Rebuilding Trust

At first, the mistrust ran so deep that he had to accept payments only by month. Contracts were out of the question. He says he couldn't even "get people to leave money in my hand."

All this considering he really didn't start out to make martial arts his career? Perry had chances to fry bigger fish. He was offered a full-time bodyguard job for the rock band Bon Jovi after serving in the position for a nearby tour stop. Instead, he chose the flat prairies of rural central Illinois and doesn't regret it.

Three moves later to subsequently larger quarters, he's found success in the martial arts and his personal life. He's married and has a 2-year-old son. Becky, his "biggest asset" and wife of five years and a third-degree, Kukkiwon-certified black belt instructor, tends to the Taylorville school while he spends most of his time nurturing their 4-year-old Springfield branch.

But it took a long time and lots of work to overcome small-town prejudices, especially at strangers bearing mysterious gifts of the Orient. There's really no secret formula to his success.

He recommends blending into local society. To do that he had to knock off a few rough edges accumulated during his youth in the rugged streets of Rockford, Ill., the second largest city in Illinois south of Chicago. Long hair and ragged clothes didn't exactly endear him to the local business community, he says. A hair cut and a change of clothes transformed him into someone a bit more palatable.

The physical makeover was easy. Then, he had to "walk the talk." That is, he had to show what he and his school were made of and that his product would stick around. He donned his dobok (uniform), took a deep breath and ventured into the community demonstrating his art and spreading the word that a new and different kind of instructor was in town.

But the effort at community relations should go beyond demonstrations, Perry says. He taught self-defense to church groups, sheriff's deputies, to school students, even gave workshops on stress reduction. Beyond martial arts, he served two years as an *unpaid* auxiliary police officer.

Transcending the Physical

Don't limit your marketing strategy to demonstrating the physical aspects. Perry says it's important to emphasize the higher, philosophical elements of the martial arts—character-building—over the violent aspects. "It's the message of the art of the empty hand."

But emphasizing the philosophy doesn't mean that you're trying to gut their character, Perry says. Don't heighten their suspicions. "We can improve your life, not change it," should be your message.

Affiliations also add credibility to your program, he says. Perry holds a fifth-dan certification from the Kukkiwon, the headquarters of the World Taekwondo Federation in Seoul, South Korea, as well as a sixth dan from the United States National Taekwondo Federation, for which he serves as state director.

But, he says, market yourself or your school solely on your own merits, not those of a faceless organization. Because, he warns, if the organization fails, your reputation may suffer.

He also belongs to the United States Taekwondo Union and served two years as vice-president of the Illinois Taekwondo Association.

Staying Above Reproach

Perry says reputation is everything in a small community. Everyone knows everyone and their business. Keep yours spick-and-span, he advises.

That applies in other ways too. Perry cautions small-town instructors against flaunting their success. Modest is better; park the Mercedes in the garage.

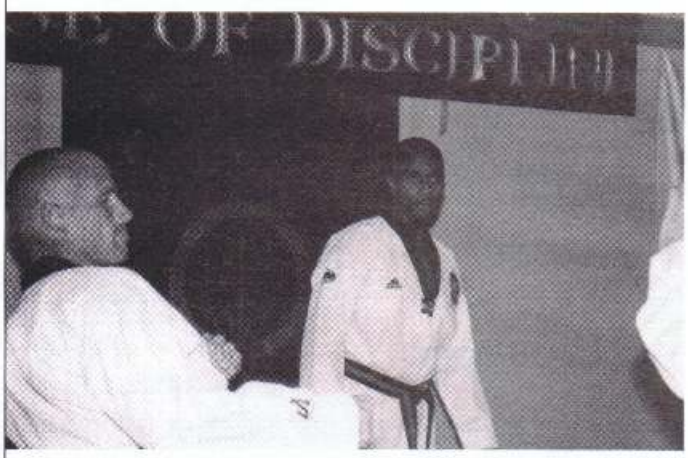
"In the city, the instructor is expected to be successful and demonstrate that by his or her possessions, he says. "In the small town, the instructor is also expected to be successful but modestly demonstrated."

That kind of success may be a ways off at first in a small town. Perry says getting started is rough. Lower your sights a bit. Expect a meager income, one too small to support a family.

To finally cross that economic barrier, he employed good-ol' American work ethic. He stayed in the school, even on days when no one showed up. That's a sign of a professional school, he says.

That professionalism helps keep him successful. When he's not there he leaves someone in charge who will carry on his professionalism. "Not just anyone can be left in charge when I am not there. They are a reflection of me. Business can take a turn for the worse a lot faster than it took to build."

To help keep business good, Perry says martial arts instructors should be mentors for children. Set an example for them and emphasize the character-building aspects of your art. "We are a mentor for them—not Michael Jordan or Charles Barkley,"



Perry supervises two of his many black belt students as they spar.

he says. Local kids rarely ever see those celebrities. You're it, so make the best of it.

Perry takes this mentor idea in the other direction. You should always have a mentor of your own, an instructor who can give you advice and fine-tune your ability.

Never grow comfortable and complacent in your success, he says. Ask others to evaluate your teaching ability. How can you improve? Also, Perry visits schools throughout the nation, gleaning helpful hints.

Getting the Word Out

As visible as both he and his school became, it wasn't always so. Perry advertises heavily on television. He gets the best results from television advertising and, in fact, discourages radio spots. He says radio just doesn't work as well.

But, Perry says the best form of advertising is exposure in the local news media. He's appeared in feature articles in the Springfield and Taylorville newspapers.

How do you know when you've won them over? Well, apart from the financial upswing, "You'll know that you are established when the same civic organizations repeatedly request you to speak—not demonstrate—to groups."

Perry says his students are now involved in many aspects of his school including small construction projects, a practice he steered clear of at first. He says you should resist the temptation of exchanging your lessons for the services of students who have skills you may desperately need. You can't feed yourself or your family on the labor of others.

Perry doesn't rely on contracts per se. He calls them "in-house agreements," more of a business relationship than a legally-binding document: He provides martial arts instruction and they pay on time. Squabbles over contracts provide more fodder for local criticism. Taking people to court is a bad practice, especially in a small community.

He rarely has problems with students backing out of agreements. "Out of 50 students, you might have two that back out." The important thing, Perry says, is to make them feel comfortable about signing on the dotted line. If someone does decide to pull out, find out why, before the problem spreads.

Though Perry teaches taekwondo, don't worry about your martial art's popularity. "It is not so much the art as the program that you have," he says.

Perhaps the best example of extending outward to the community was teaching children with special needs for the school district, he says. The project wrapped up with a tournament benefit, raising $6,000 for charity. Perry's annual tournament draws 400-500 competitors from across Illinois and surrounding states to Taylorville High School, well off the beaten path.

It could be said the success of a businessman can be gauged by the opinions of his peers. In 1995, the local Chamber of Commerce named Perry "Minority Businessman of the Year." That shows just what a little discipline can accomplish.

Despite his success, he still runs into occasional race resistance, but doesn't let it become "a thorn in his side." He has faith in what he does. He says, "God put me here to teach martial arts." ■

Bill Fellt is a black belt in taekwondo and a freelance writer for martial arts magazines.

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BY ROB COLASANTI

Three Powerful Strategies to Jump Start Your School in 1998

As the Senior Consultant for close to 1,400 active NAPMA (National Association of Professional Martial Artists) schools, I have the unique opportunity to speak with hundreds of martial art school owners each week. For nine hours a day, instructors from East Coast to West Coast share with me a universe of facts, figures, statistics, personal challenges and business needs.

These schools typically consist of about 50 to 100 students and are largely part-time businesses. They are run by a typical well-intentioned who loves to teach but knows very little about running an actual business. This is the most common type of school out there.

In my conversations, I quickly detect where school owners are strong and where they can use some help. In a consultative interview, I learn how many students they have, their number of employees, how long they've been in business, their hours of operation, their retention, etc. I ask a lot of questions, take a lot of notes and then provide some helpful suggestions.



A good program director does not have to be a black belt.

One thing I've noticed is that school owners often share similar sentiments regarding growth. Many claim they are working harder and harder just to maintain status quo. They say that they've been in business for years, but their student count has hardly changed and they can't seem to get it to budge. They feel like they deserve more out of their business for both themselves and their families. A lot dream of going full-time but don't feel they can.

What I've discovered is that the majority of the school owners that fit into this category are trapped there because of a number of common, yet easy-to-fix operational errors. With a little help from the us, they tend to make enormous strides in a very short period of time. I've seen this happen over and over again.

To help you kick off the year, I'd like to share with you three tips that have been proven to take the stuck-in-a-rut school to a whole new level.

1. Start Building A Staff

The number-one limiting factor in the growth and development of the average school is its lack of staff. Frankly, it is impossible to run the day-to-day operations of a studio without the proper help. There is just too much to be done and this is where most instructors drop the ball.

All schools have a Chief Instructor. This is the person with the technical expertise and experience necessary to teach the classes and bring students to black belt. This is a full-time job that centers itself predominantly around retention.

Then, of course, there is the other half of the business which entails telemarketing follow-up, prospecting, newsletter design, absentee calls, introductory lessons, enrollment conferences, renewal presentations, gear sales, dealing with information calls, filing paperwork, etc. , etc., etc. ! These are the tasks and duties of a Program Director. Indeed, this individual is a key player in the growth of any school.

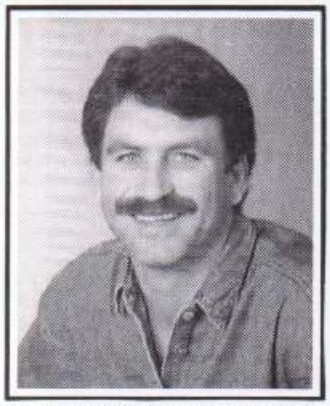
When the Chief Instructor tries to do all of the teaching plus the many critical jobs of a Program Director as well, the end result is usually poor. In this situation, both halves of the business end up suffering from mediocre performance. Neither job is getting done with any real efficiency and this causes the lack of growth that is so prevalent among that average small school. Wouldn't you agree that you can only stretch one person so far before there is a breakdown in the system?

When consulting, I often recommend that one really solid person assumes the role of Program Director. Many school owners say they can't find or afford this critical staff member. Often, this is because they're not clear as to what actually qualifies an individual to hold this position.

The biggest misconception I encounter is that a Program Director needs to be a black belt. That notion is completely false. A person doesn't have to be a black belt to teach a highly motivational 20-minute intro, file papers or sell a membership to the school. In fact, the least important quality to look

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I've Just Got To Get This Off My Chest Before I Explode!!!



How Does a First Degree Black Belt Teach His Instructor To Fill Up His School With New Students And Then Go Open His Own School, And Have It Full In 11 Months?

Let Me Tell You How! If You Do Not Read This Page At Least I've Done My Part.

You see one day this guy comes up to me and says "hey" you are spending all this money every month on ***advertising that gets you about 7 students a month if your lucky****. Then he said* ***if I could show you a way that could spend about 250.00 to 350.00 per month and at least double this*** *with hard work and would eliminate the need for an advertising budget, would you be interested? Well obviously I said yes. I Knew that one newspaper ad cost that, and if I only signed up 15 new students per month, I would generate much more than he was asking and I was already spending about 800 to 1200 per month and only getting 3,4,5, new ones each month. I certainly wasn't scared to work, I'd been busting my tail and not doing jack. Well* ***to make a long story short, they came out, trained us ,installed the system and taught my staff how to close. We received marketing and operational trainning manuals with on screen movies and video. It was so easy I was extremely surprised! I've got two schools now and this guy has got schools across the country doing the same thing.*** *He gave me a little flyer one day, that is what you are about to read, however I just want to be the first to tell you that you're making a big, big mistake if you don't check into this one. Now that I've got this off my chest, I want you to read the flyer I received from him.*

The martial arts organizations that will survive and be prospcrous in today's market are positioned in a manner that is lean and ready to handle the constant change of today's economy. Arc you tired of throwing away money on advertising? Do you want **more students**? Do you want to increase your income two or three fold? Would you like us to show you how to do this without any out-of-pocket expense? 'Sound too good to be true? Well, it **is** true, just ask our existing **martial arts clients**. They are so excited, **they did not even want us to disclose** this amazing marketing breakthrough to their competitors. We felt it would be unfair for us to allow that to happen, so we developed a **way to protect each karate school in an area.**

Don't miss out on this. At least give yourself the opportunity to see for yourself how incredible this turn-key program will work in your business. We would be happy to prove what we claim! You owe it to yourself, your family, and your employees to see how this amazing advertising system will give you an almost unfair advantage over your competitors!

The **Lead generation** System is not only extremely effective, it is extremely **cost** effective. Based upon our lease purchase agreement, with **no money down**, you could nearly pay for the system before your first payment is due! Based on the lowest response rate of only 1%, that's **40 qualified prospects a day**, and with a conversion rate of only 10%, that is **4 new students a day!!** Imagine the sales growth you can experience when **you are able to spend your time enrolling and teaching and not prospecting!**

WORDS FROM MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL OWNERS

"I've never seen anything work so well for a ***third of the cost I was spending*** *on advertising."*
Conneticut Martial Arts- Steve Doyon-203-792-1544

"I was skeptical at first until I saw it work, and then I couldn't believe it. It totally paid itself in the first three weeks of operation after we enrolled 27 new students. Now ***we average about 20 new students each month*** *using the system."*
Brandon McRea Southwest Karate 281-565-9696

I use the system religously*, I don't care what anyone says, this is everything they say and 10 times more!*
Raymond Wolsifer Martial Arts America 504-778-0263

"It's simply ***the best enrollment tool for the cost*** *in the busines, and their company support is truly amazing."*
Usa Karate Scott Kifer 708-665-8322

"From the largest academy to the smallest school, the ***Lead generation*** *system by Today's Network Group, Inc., is by far the most cost effective lead generating source for our business in today's market.* ***I signed 44 students in my first 30 days with the Lead generation Advertising System****. The only reason I didn't sign more was because I literally couldn't handle more white belts than that with only one other black belt instructor at the time. Once I saw just how useful this technology was in finding customers for my other businesses, I knew that it would be ideal for the martial arts. My new school was filled with students even sooner than my wildest projections. As President of Today's Network Group, I consider it an honor to share the years of research our company has devoted to the* ***Lead generation*** *System with other martial artist like yourself. Please feel free to call me at* ***1-800-932-6382*** *and talk with anyone in our group or request a list of satisfied* ***Lead generation*** *customers in other industries. I'm looking forward to your comments." --- Max Day*

1-800-932-6382

TODAY'S NETWORK GROUP 11999 KATY FREEWAY #500 HOUSTON, TEXAS 77079

NAPMA

How To: Get More Students, Have a Smoother Running Operation, Reduce Stress, and Increase Profits

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL MARTIAL ARTISTS

As martial artists, most of us didn't decide to get into the martial arts business because we thought it was a quick way to get rich. We chose this life because we love to teach and we love to train. However, the reality is that a Martial Arts School is a business, and you can't make it in this highly competitive business without growing revenues, new students, and without constantly marketing and prospecting to make your school grow. That's why the National Association of Professional Martial Artists (NAPMA) was formed.

NAPMA has put together a powerful team of marketing professionals to give school owners affordable access to proven, quality marketing and advertising materials that would normally be out of reach for most small to medium sized businesses.



Each month NAPMA provides you and your school with the professional marketing, advertising, and operational materials to make your school grow faster than you ever dreamed possible. This allows you to focus on the area that motivated you to open a school in the first place; teaching Martial Arts. NAPMA was designed from the ground up to be so affordable that any school could afford to participate, and is set up to pay for itself by adding just TWO new students (not two students a month, just two students!) And the whole program is backed by NAPMA's unconditional money-back guarantee!

NAPMA has put together a powerful team of marketing professionals to give school owners affordable access to proven, quality marketing and advertising materials that would normally be out of reach for most small to medium sized businesses





MONTHLY MARKETING MUSCLE: Each month as a NAPMA member, you receive:

- Professionally Designed Camera Ready Ads and Flyers—Just Drop in Your Logo and Contact Info
- NAPMA's National Black Belt Club Program and pre-designed Black Belt Club newsletter
- Member Discounts on Retail Products from leading manufacturers
- Complimentary subscription to the Industry Trade Journal "Martial Arts Professional Magazine"
- Monthly Video Training Tapes on Marketing, Operations, Teaching, and more
- NAPMA's enormously successful Cardio Karate™ program, plus ongoing support materials and ad slicks
- Full Color Martial Arts Motivational Posters each month for your school
- Professionally designed Student Newsletter—just add your own info and use it as a marketing piece!
- Access to NAPMA's Toll-Free Consulting Hotline
- Special In-House Promotional Events designed for your use.
- Networking Contact With Other Member Schools
- Discounted Insurance Rates For NAPMA Members
- NAPMA's New Student Transfer Program Helps Overcome Enrollment Objections
- Use of NAPMA Designation in all your Marketing Materials and Ads
- Super Selling Strategies Monthly Report
- NAPMA Training Seminar on Audio Tape

the benefits of napma membership



NAPMA has grown, in two short years, to become the nation's largest and fastest growing professional martial arts organization for one simple reason—NAPMA works for school owners nationwide!

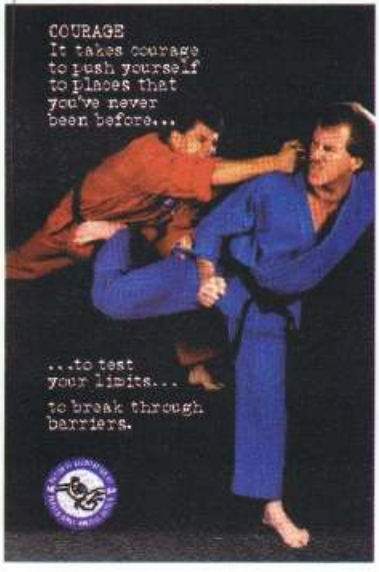
Each month NAPMA members receive a package packed with proven, professionally designed marketing and operation materials that are designed to:

- Increase your enrollment dramatically
- Give you a smoother running operation
- Reduce your stress
- And increase your profits

By providing you with proven marketing and training materials, NAPMA leaves you free to concentrate on providing quality instruction for your students. Your monthly package contains:

- Professionally designed school ads and flyers in a variety of sizes. These ads are designed using the latest marketing research and information to make the phone ring and the door swing! They're ready-to-go, just pop in your logo and phone number.
- You get NAPMA's National Black Belt Club program, which is designed from the ground up to help you, the school owner, attract and retain quality students though their commitment to reaching Black Belt status the right way; through hard work and discipline. You also get our Black Belt Club Newsletter to distribute to your students and keep them involved.
- You'll get special discounts on retail inventory products from some of the biggest martial arts products manufacturers. You can save thousands each year with this benefit alone!
- Each month you'll receive "Martial Arts Professional" magazine, the trade journal for professional martial artists, packed with informative columns, how-to's, marketing and sales columns, feature articles, and industry news from the best martial arts writers in the business.
- You'll get our monthly training video tapes focusing on training your staff, marketing your school, and teaching your students. An invaluable resource for any size school. You'll soon build a library of NAPMA training tapes you can refer to again and again.
- Each month you'll get "Kickin'," the monthly newsletter designed as a marketing tool for your school. These professionally designed newsletters are a proven way to reach potential new students. Just add your logo and contact info.
- You get access to the NAPMA toll-free consulting hotline for help with your marketing materials, videos, Black Belt Club program, and all aspects of NAPMA membership.
- You've read and heard about the Cardio Karate™ phenomenon that is sweeping the nation right? Well NAPMA is the organization that created it. (Cardio Karate is a registered trademark of NAPMA) and you get the full program, monthly marketing materials, video curriculum flyers and ads— everything you need to roll out a Cardio Karate program in your school FREE with your NAPMA membership.
- Your monthly package includes a full color martial arts motivational poster for use in your school. (See the sample at left.)
- Our Student Transfer Program allows your students to transfer from one NAPMA school to another. With over 1,300 schools nationwide, if one of your students relocates, there's sure to be a NAPMA school nearby.
- You'll also get our audio tape seminars each month that let you learn while you drive.
- Plus much, much more.

cardioKARATE® THE WORKOUT THAT PACKS A PUNCH™



Each month you'll receive a great motivational poster!

How To Become A NAPMA Member

NAPMA Professional Membership includes a monthly support program that provides you with:

- A three-part Video Seminar each month
- Separate Audio Tape Seminars
- Camera Ready Advertisements that get quick results
- Proven Retention techniques and strategies
- Pre-designed Marketing Campaigns
- Authorization to use the NAPMA member designation on your printed materials
- In-house NAPMA sponsored promotions for student retention and profit
- The National Black Belt Club
- Newsletter
- Travel Discounts
- Toll-free consulting hotline to help you get the most from the material and much, much more.

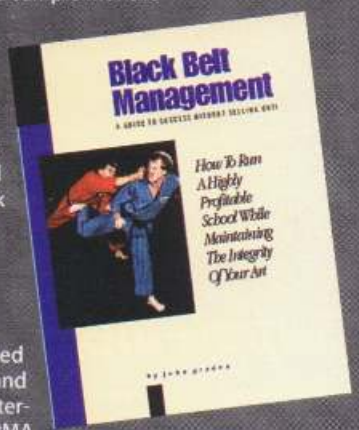
NAPMA membership is affordable for every school

NAPMA membership is an ongoing monthly subscription at $99 (+$3 shipping). There are no contracts and you can cancel at any time. If NAPMA helps you enroll just two more students and they stay in class, your yearly membership is paid for by their tuition. That's not two students per month; that just two students period! That's only $23 per week for all of the value of the NAPMA Professional membership.

The NAPMA Start Up Kit is Only $99 (plus $10 S&H)

The NAPMA Start Up Kit includes a sample month's material plus two bonuses:

Bonus #1—THE BLACK BELT MANAGEMENT MANUAL (Retail $149.00)
This fully illustrated guidebook to operating a successful school is considered to be the best book ever written on the subject.



Bonus #2—THE NAPMA RETENTION AND FINANCIAL CONTROL SYSTEM
This control system is designed with the retention, statistical and enrollment forms needed to interface your school with the NAPMA program.

Money Back Guarantee!

We are so confident in our program, and so many schools have had such resounding success with our program, that we extend a full 30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE from receipt of your Start-up Kit. Run the ads, watch the tapes, read the material and learn all you can. If you don't agree that your school will benefit from NAPMA membership (at $3.25 a day), then return our package for a full refund.

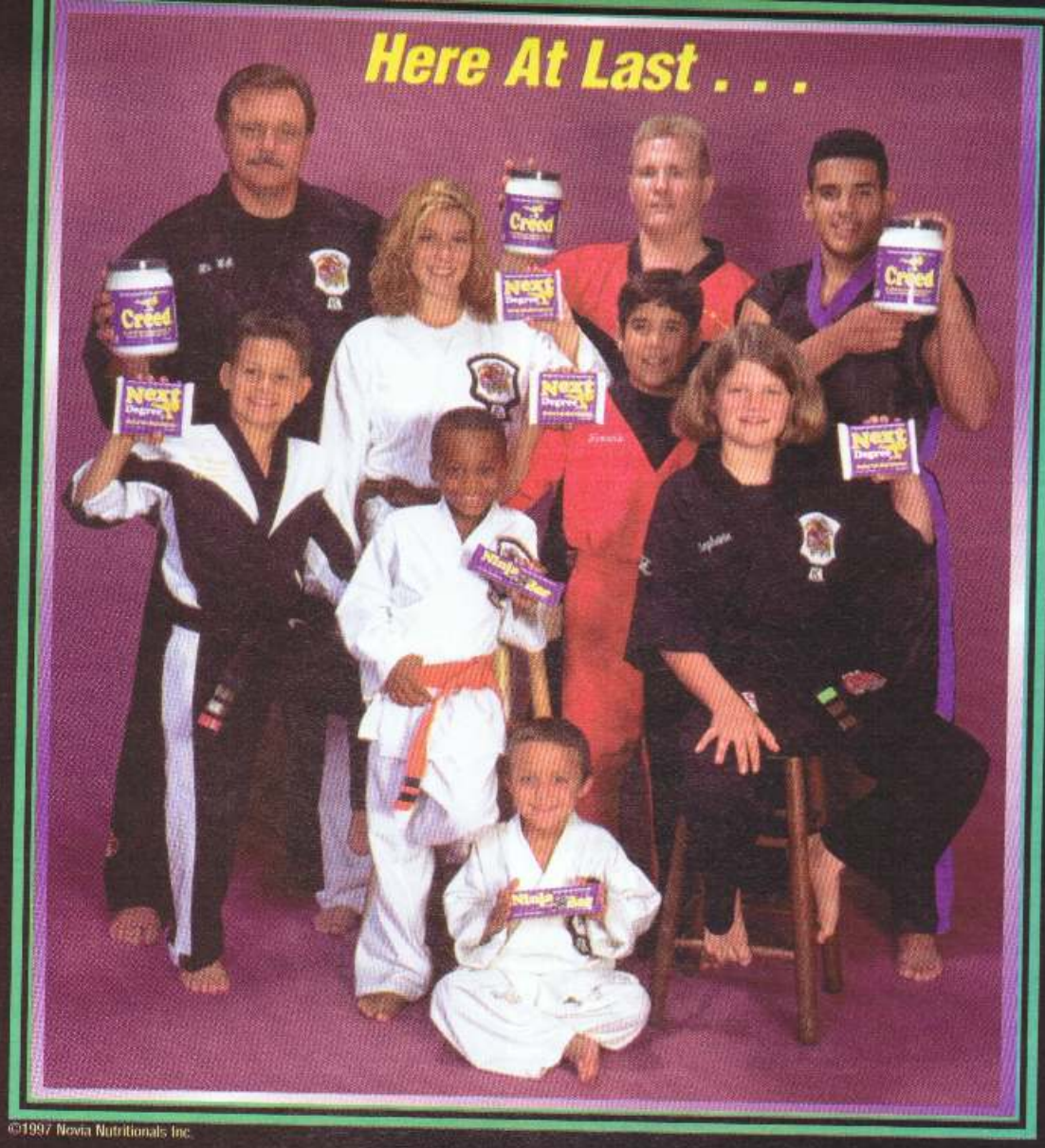
How To Get Started

Order your NAPMA start-up kit by calling:

Enroll today—before your competition does!

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National Association Of Professional Martial Artists

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Supplements Designed Exclusively For Martial Artists!

Ninja Bar™

Great tasting, high nutrition candy bars. Each bar contains 15 grams of protein, 100% RDI of vitamins and 30% RDI of minerals. Try one before or after class.

$24 for box of 12.

Next Degree™

Now you can fortify your daily diet with this high potency nutrition shake. This quick mixing powder is loaded with protein, vitamins and minerals. Tastes great too!

$40 for box of 20.

Kick™ ENERGY BOOSTER

Need an energy boost before class or at your tournaments? Kick is an all natural herbal energy formula that will rev you up with hours of energy. Very effective

$9.95 for 30 tablets.

Creed™

This product has it all! Over 55 of the most popular sports supplements all in one super powder. Definitely delivers the goods. For elite athletes only. Not recommended for students under 18.

$24.95 for 1.25 lbs.

Satisfaction Guaranteed Or Your Money Back!

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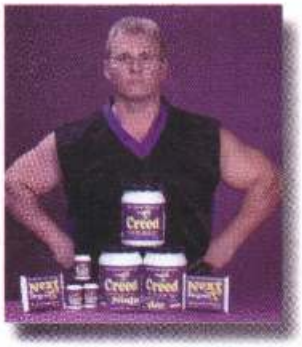


BEHIND THE SCENES:

What's All The Fuss About This New Line Of Sports Supplements?

By Mark Blackington





"At last there's a line of supplements just for martial artists."

Recently, advertisements have begun appearing in several martial arts magazines for a new line of nutritional supplements called ***The Way****. Like many of you, I too have been intrigued by the claims being made for these products. And so, to learn more about them, I decided to get the low-down directly from the people behind the company.*

Participating in the interview below were Greg Ciola, President of The Way, and Debora Toole Sommerville, Manager of Sales and Marketing.

Q. *"Well Greg and Debora, first of all we want to thank you for taking the time to talk with us about your new line of martial arts sports supplements. We're seeing your ads everywhere. What prompted this line of products. . . in other words, how did this whole thing get started?"*

Greg: "Actually, a lot of the impetus for this line came straight from Debora. We had worked together in the past on several nutritional projects. However, over the last few years, we had pretty much lost touch with each other. That's why I was so pleasantly surprised when Debora called me with her ideas for marketing sports supplements to martial artists. As a matter of fact, our company too had already begun looking at the martial arts market and we felt strongly that there was a need for nutritional products here. When Debora called to express the same belief, we thought that it was more than coincidental. I'd like to be able to say that after her first call, we got together and put this whole thing in motion, but that's not the way it went. Since our parent nutritional company was sidetracked on many other projects, it was only after several calls from Debora, that we finally got together."

Q. *"Debora, what made you feel so strongly that there was a need for nutritional products in martial arts?"*

Debora: "A few years ago, I met a wonderful man named Walter Sommerville, who swept me off my feet and right down the altar. Walter had spent 22 years of his life studying martial arts and is a fourth degree black belt in American Kenpo Karate.

When we met, I knew nothing about martial arts. I come from a health and fitness background and have spent most of my life working in these areas. As Walter and I got to know each other better, we enthusiastically shared our interests. He began to teach me martial arts and I began to teach him the importance of exercise, diet and nutrition. We both benefited immensely from this mutual exchange.

The one thing I noticed immediately, both with Walter and his associates, was their very limited involvement with sports nutrition products. This was really strange to me since, as a Ms. Fitness competitor, I had to rely heavily on nutritional supplements to achieve my goals. I introduced Walter to several sports nutrition products and his body began to respond almost immediately. He was impressed and so was I. That's when I first started to realize that there was a strong need for supplementation in the whole martial arts world.

Since I had worked closely with the Ciolas in the past, I immediately thought to give them a call and review my ideas. As Greg just said, it took several phone conversations before we actually sat down to discuss this whole thing. We both agreed there was a need for sports supplements in the martial arts field and we were very excited by the prospect of getting started immediately. I agreed to go to work for Greg's company as head of the martial arts division."

Greg: "Our original plan was to just start promoting products to the martial arts market that we were already selling elsewhere. And so, we ran a series of ads for a very popular supplement we distribute called **Hot Stuff.** However, right away we started to get some interesting feedback off the ads. What we found out from talking to lots of enthusiastic people around the country is that martial artists do, in fact, want a good line of nutritional supplements. But we kept hearing the same thing over and over again. 'Don't just give us a line of bodybuilding supplements. Why don't you people design a line specifically for the martial arts student. That's something we definitely can use.' And so I decided to pull all of our Hot Stuff advertising and regroup."

Q. *"What did you do next?"*

Greg: "We needed to do some market research. We

continued on next page

ADVERTISEMENT



"... The thing that surprised us most was just how many young people are involved with martial arts."

needed to know specifically just what was needed in the martial arts schools. And so, we sent out hundreds of questionnaires to martial arts schools around the country. We also visited several schools in the central Florida area. We asked lots of questions and then we listened very attentively."

Debora: "Actually, this was a somewhat frustrating time for me. Here at last, I was seeing my dream come true. Our ads were generating lots of calls every day. I was talking to many people around the country when all of a sudden, we pulled back. Even though I knew Greg's decision was right, I could hear the disappointment in the callers when I told them that we were re-evaluating everything. I so desperately wanted to get this thing up and going and now there would be a delay. But as we pondered over the data and began to discuss putting together a whole new line of martial arts supplements, I have to admit, I was really starting to get excited."

Q. *"What kind of information did your marketing research provide?"*

Greg: "I think the thing that surprised us the most was just how many young people are involved with martial arts. In fact, many students are 16 or younger. In light of this, our nutritional consultants advised us that these young students didn't need super-duper, mega-potency, sports supplements with all kinds of exotic ingredients. Instead, because of their age, growth requirements and martial arts training, what they really needed were basic, all around supplements that would provide them with high quality proteins for muscle growth and repair, carbohydrates for energy and recovery and generous amounts of all the vitamins and minerals."

Debora: "That's right! It's common knowledge that most young people don't eat properly. They're always in a hurry. There's junk food everywhere and it's just so easy for them to grab whatever's available. Sodas, pizzas, hot dogs, cookies, cakes are not the stuff from which strong bodies are made. As we reviewed the situation with our nutritionists, we concluded that there was a great need for highly nutritious supplements that could also be used quickly and conveniently. That's when we first came up with the idea for the **Ninja Bar**. Since most kids love to eat candy bars anyway, why not give them a great nutritional bar that they can eat before or after class?"



Debora and Greg review product line goals.

"Since most kids love to eat candy bars, why not give them a great nutritional bar that they can eat before or after class?"

Greg: "The problem with making sports nutrition bars is to get all the great nutrition into them and still make them taste good. I'm really pleased to say that we achieved this with the **Ninja Bar.** Each bar contains 15 grams of complete protein, 100% of the daily requirement for vitamins and 30% of the daily mineral requirement. And the best part of all is that these bars taste great!"

Debora: "There's no doubt about that. All the schools I'm dealing with tell me that their students love these bars. In fact, their only problem is trying to keep enough of them in stock. Some people are buying a box at a time and eating them throughout the day. I've even heard that several students' mothers are also getting hooked on **Ninja Bars.** That's okay because these high nutrition bars would be good for anybody in the family."

Q. *"What other products have you brought out besides the **Ninja Bar?**"*

Debora: "Right now we have three other products - **Next Degree**, **Kick** and **Creed**. **Next Degree** is a highly fortified nutritional powder that's meant to be taken at meal time. Like the **Ninja Bar**, it too is loaded with complete proteins, vitamins and minerals. It is a nearly perfect nutritional supplement for hard training martial arts students."

Greg: "That's right, Debora. As a matter of fact, we refer to **Next Degree** as a meal enhancer because when it is consumed with a meal, it fills in all of the missing nutritional pieces. As we said earlier, many people, young and old, are eating on the run. Fast foods. . . junk foods. . . low nutrition foods. No athlete, martial arts student or otherwise, is going to excel on this type of diet. Athletes need their protein, vitamins and minerals, and that's where Next Degree comes in. It's almost like having a nutritional insurance policy."

Debora: "Don't forget to mention Greg, that **Next Degree** tastes great, dissolves instantly and can be mixed in any beverage. In fact, when it's mixed with milk, it tastes like a delicious chocolate milk shake."

Q. *"Is this **Next Degree** just for kids?"*





"... **Next Degree** tastes great, dissolves instantly and can be mixed with any beverage."

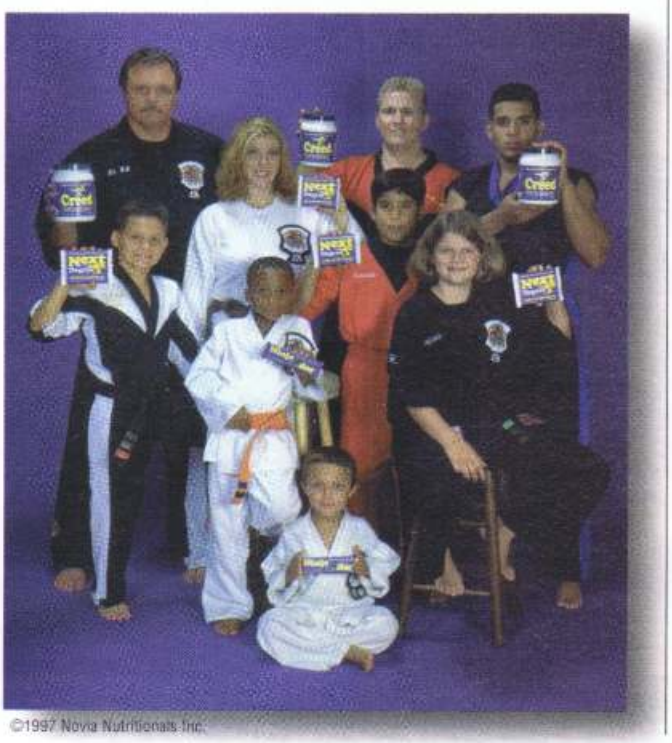
"It is so much more convenient for students to pick up these products right at their school."

Greg: "No, not at all. It's been designed for all hard training martial arts students - no matter what age. But since growing kids have such high nutritional requirements, **Next Degree** is perfect for them."

Q. *"Tell me a little about these other products."*

Debora: "One thing that kept coming up over and over again in our survey was a request for a good energy product - something that would really boost stamina during class. To meet that request, we brought out an herbal energy product called **"Kick."** **Kick** comes in tablets and is made from all natural ingredients. It is one hundred percent safe and really lives up to its name. **Kick** will definitely help students get the most out of each training session. It works almost immediately and lasts for several hours."

Greg: "I think that we should also mention, Debora, that a lot of martial artists are using **Kick** before competiting in tournaments. Those that do are telling us that the results are fantastic! Boundless energy and increased strength obviously come in very handy in a tournament."



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Q. *"And what about **Creed**?"*

Debora: "Another interesting thing that we uncovered in our market research is that there is also a hardcore group of elite martial artists who want and need the most powerful nutritional supplements on the market. Something not for beginners. . . for kids. . . for rookies. But something for the ultimate warriors. Since there are so many good sports nutrition products now being sold, we decided that the best way to fill this request was to put them all into one super powder. That powder is **"Creed."** **Creed** contains over 55 of the most popular sports nutrition supplements all in one jam-packed product. There's no guess work with **Creed**. Everything that could possibly benefit the elite martial arts student is in this product."

Greg: "Including ten very powerful oriental herbs."

Debora: "Yes. . . oriental herbs. I almost forgot. Anyway, **Creed** will definitely give elite martial artists the edge they're looking for. It will make them stronger, help them recover faster, give them more energy and reduce their chances of injury. It's just a dynamite product!"

Q. *"So, are these four products it, or do you plan to come out with other supplements?"*

Greg: "One of the things that continues to amaze us is how helpful school owners have been. They've passed along some great suggestions to us and they have been very forthright in telling us the needs of their students. As a result, we are already working on three additional products that we will be coming out with very soon. I can't stress enough what a commitment our company is making to meet the nutritional demands of the martial arts student. Our goal is to bring to this group of athletes the very best products on earth and at very reasonable prices. Therefore, I strongly encourage anyone reading this story who would like to make a suggestion, to feel free to call or write us any time. **The Way** is about a long-term commitment. It's about filling a need. Not taking the money and run!!"

Q. *"Well, it's certainly nice to know that a nutritional company cares so much about the needs of the martial artist. So how does someone go about purchasing your products?"*

Debora: "While we are happy to sell our products directly by mail order, we much prefer that the schools themselves become distributors. It is so much more convenient for students to pick up these products right at their school. This also provides the school a chance to earn some extra income. We have put together a very thorough distributor program that includes a convenient floor display, informative handout literature, signs and banners as well as attractive profit margins. Schools wishing to know more about our distributor program should call or write me as soon as possible." **(1-800-255-8906)**

Greg and Debora, thank you very much for taking the time to talk with us today. We'd like to wish you the very best success with what sounds like a great line of supplements for martial artists."

For more information call:

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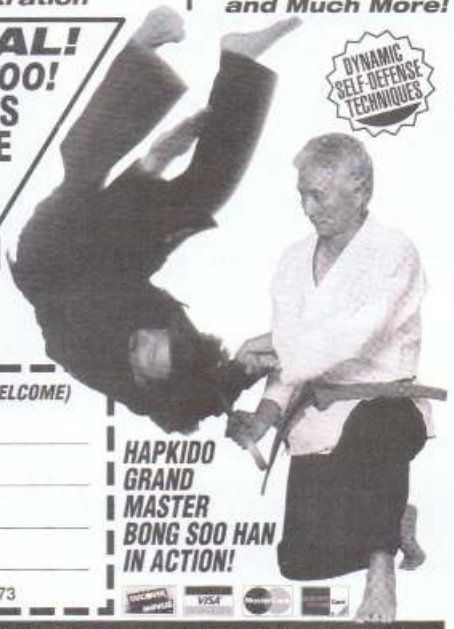
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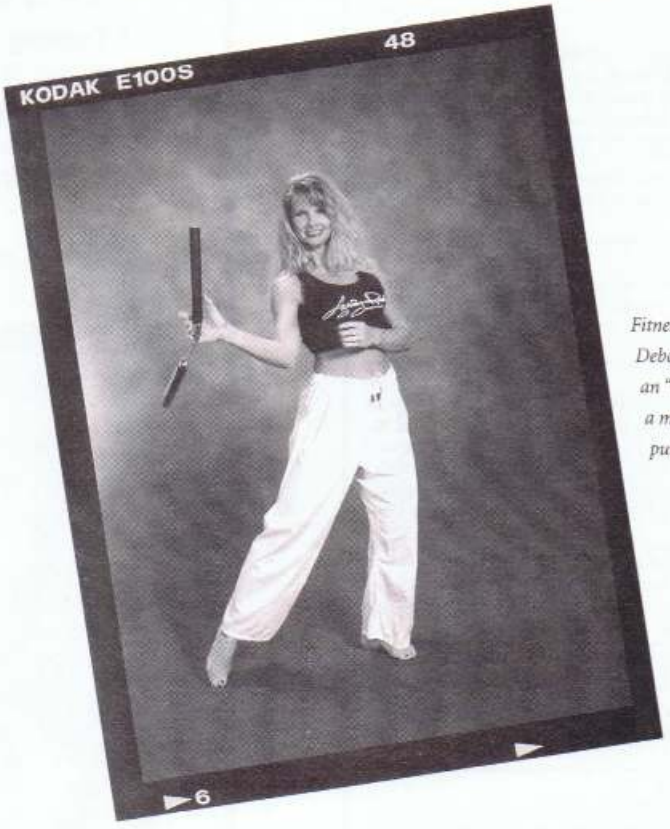
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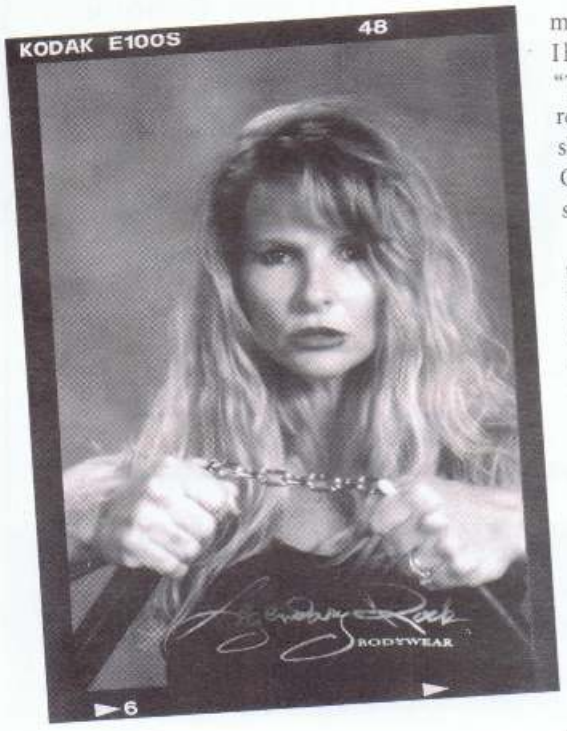


Fitness expert and champion, Deborah Sommerville, despite having an "uncomfortable" first visit to a martial arts school, is now pursing her black belt.

BY DEBORAH SOMMERVILLE

My experience as a fitness champion and athlete has taught me a lot about how to properly train the human body. In the coming months, I'll be sharing some of that information with you in this magazine. But first, "Martial Arts Professional" publisher, John Graden, suggested I share the following experience with you. I was afraid this story may come across as offensive to some of you, but he convinced me that it was an important viewpoint that we hear too little of. He thought the perspective of an adult student with my background would be valuable to you, the martial arts school owners. I certainly hope so.

One of the keys to designing a martial arts school program is to really "get into the head" of the prospective clients. I'm here to make that easy for you by relaying to you my first experience in a martial arts school. Before we go any further, let me say that I have the utmost respect for martial arts and am actively involved in a school. In fact, I married a fourth-degree black belt. I am also a national fitness champion with certification in a variety of areas pertaining to training safety and fitness.



That said, let me tell you what I felt on my first visit to a school and what many of your potential clients may also be feeling.

The health club where I was employed had a martial arts school right next door to it. Frequently, the martial arts instructors would walk into the gym in a pack. The air they gave was one of arrogance. One day, in an attempt to get them to "lighten up," I threw my arms up and gave them my best Bruce Lee impression.

Knowing now that martial artists get that all the time, I probably wouldn't have done it then. But, it worked out pretty good, I thought, because one of the guys invited me next door for a free class.

The next day, I entered his school for the first time. It was quite different from the environment I was used to at the health club. First, he informed in a somewhat impatient tone that I was to bow to the beat-up picture of his grandmaster. Okay, I'm open-minded. I didn't know who this guy in the picture was, but I'll play along.

Then, he told me to take my shoes off. This was *not* a good request. I was immediately uncomfortable. Women do not like to take their shoes off in front of strangers. I had been in sneakers all day and could only imagine how my feet smelled, much less looked. Besides, I hadn't polished my nails! (Before you say, "That's silly," let me remind you that I am relating *how I felt*, not how *you think* I should feel. I am providing what John Graden calls "Market Eyes" for you, instead of "Black Belt Eyes.")

Now this guy wants me to bare my feet to a floor that has sweat, grime and heaven knows what else seething through the carpet. I thought we could compromise. I mean, how important is this bare-feet thing? I said I would take my shoes off if I could leave my socks on. No go, he said, "It's tradition." While I considered leaving because I was so uncomfortable already, I decided to stick it out and give it a try.

I lined up with about ten other students, all under the age of 15. So here I was, a fitness champion in my mid-30s, being asked to stand in line, bow to the instructor and scream, in a very loud voice, a few verses of a "Good Citizen" poem a with a bunch of children.

Finally, the action starts. We begin with jumping jacks on a cement floor covered only with a thin carpet. Unbelievable! Every major fitness study shows that you have to have a good pair of supportive sneakers to prevent foot, ankle, shin and knee injuries. I wondered, "Why is it different for martial artists?"

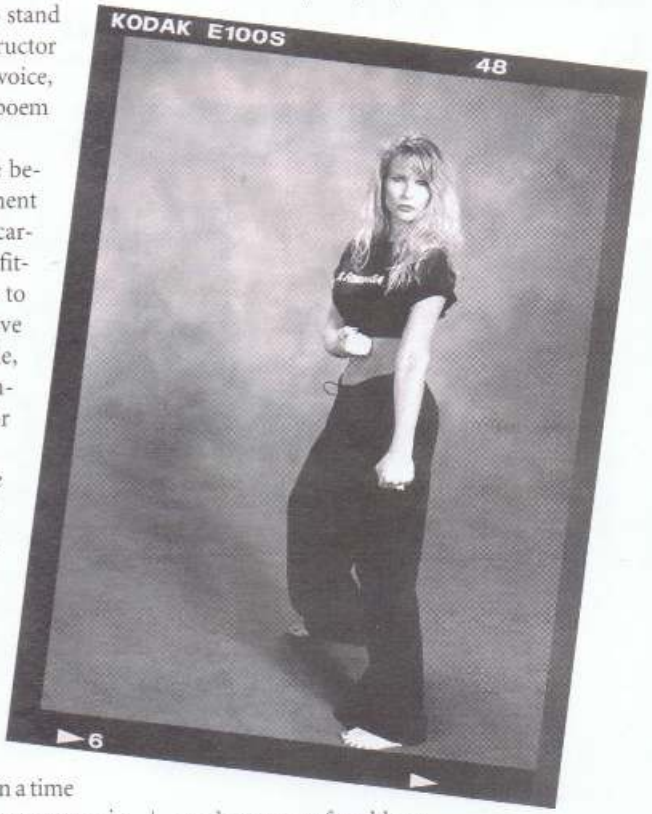
Next, we're running in a circle barefoot, on a cement floor to warm up. Then we come to a stop and are instructed to do a hundred more jumping jacks, then some squat thrusts (known as "burpies"), and then lie on our backs and perform a hundred leg-scissors. This was followed by some stretching. I kept thinking I was in a time warp. This must be how gym class was run in the 1950s.

We then started to learn a kata. The kids already knew the form and were less than patient in awaiting for me to catch up. As if the humiliation wasn't enough already, to get any help I had to bow to this 14-year-old junior instructor and call him "Sir."

I was ready to call it quits and I never returned to that school.

What is the purpose of me relating this to you? Maybe no one ever before told you what goes through the minds of adult students when they come into your school. Sure, this scenario is a little extreme (I hope) for most of you, but that was my experience. I've always been interested in martial arts and was really disappointed in how unsafe and unenjoyable the class turned out to be.

I am active in a school now. I look forward to earning my black belt in kenpo. However, I am a "black belt" in fitness and in future articles, I hope to share with you some proven facts, strategies and techniques that you can integrate into your classroom. I also hope to share with you some common errors that you can avoid so your prospective adult students aren't as uncomfortable as I was upon my first visit to a martial arts school. ■



Deborah Sommerville is a fitness champion and nutritional consultant for National Heath Products of Orlando, Florida.

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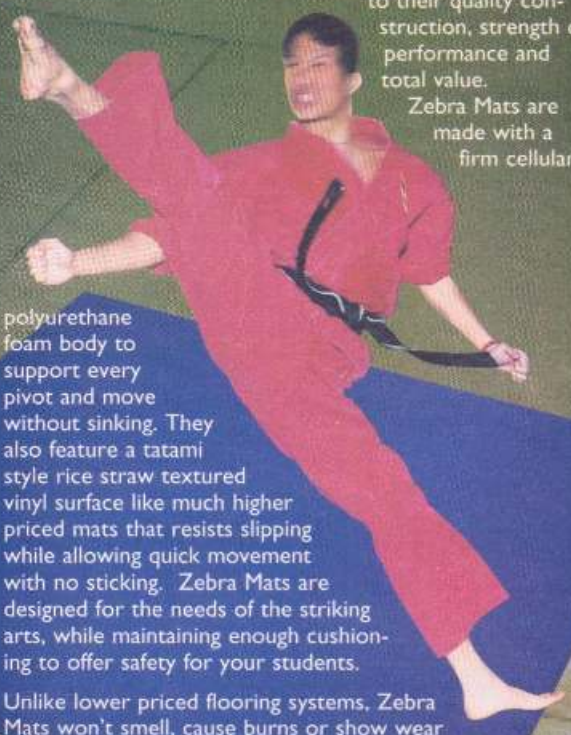
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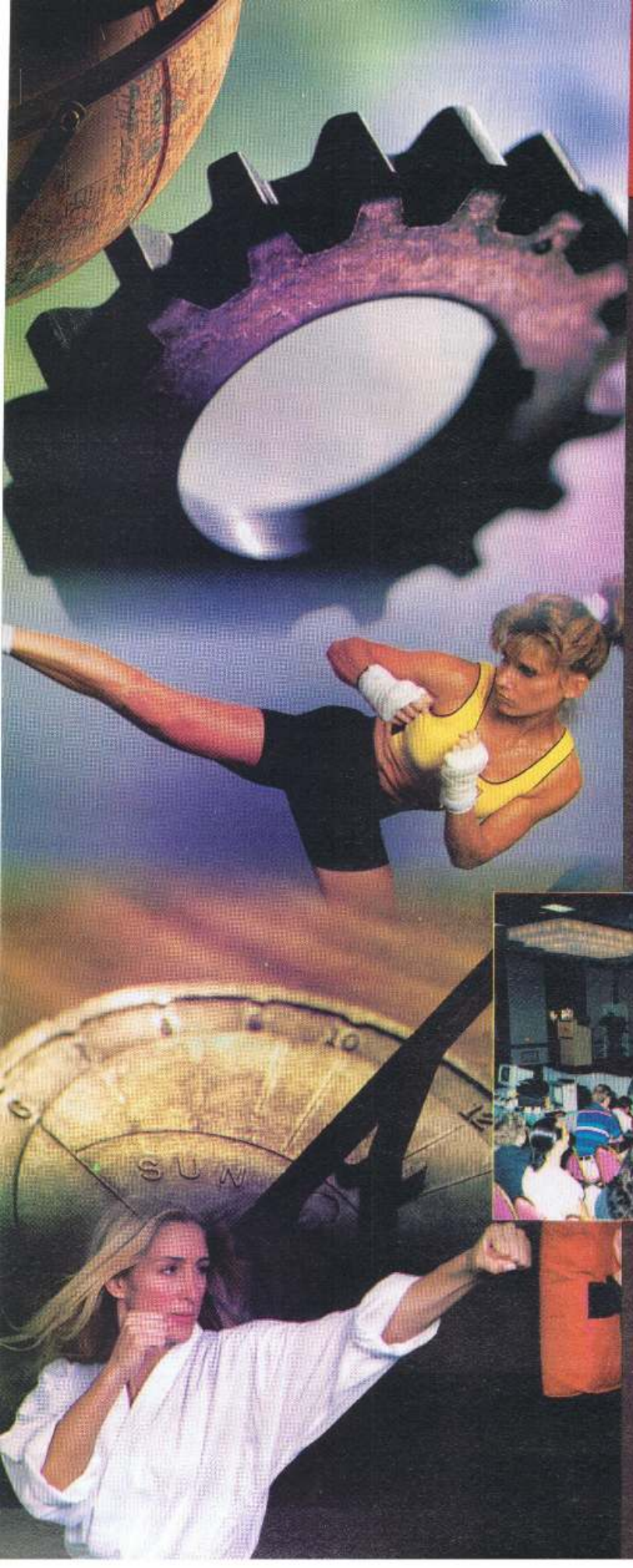
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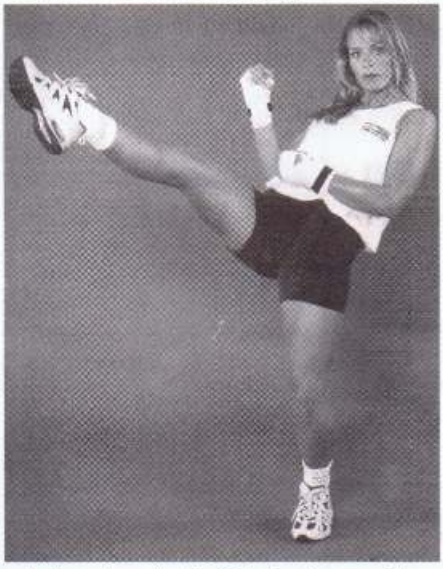
Compensating a Program Director can be done in many ways. To start, I recommend paying him a base salary combined with a "performance-based commission" of $25-40 for each new student he enrolls into the school. This is an excellent fee schedule for a beginning Program Director and is one that most schools can afford.

Once the Chief Instructor has a Program Director at his side, then a system of creating and keeping students can be achieved. As you can see, this makes for a highly-efficient team. In time, both will become experts in their particular area of the business and the school will have the revenues necessary to succeed.

2. Diversify Your Program

Many of the more successful schools in the industry are ones that offer a variety of different programs to accommodate the needs of a variety of different people.

A primary example of this is Cardio Karate. This is an excellent program for people that just want to work-out without having to go through all the rituals of conventional martial arts training. There is a huge market for aerobic martial arts training and anyone who chooses not to do it, for whatever reason, is simply turning away potential students.



In the past year, Aerobic Kickboxing has grown into a very successful program and revenue generator for schools nationwide.

Likewise, age-specific programs for preschoolers, daytime classes, kickboxing fitness workouts, pure self-defense courses for adults and tai-chi classes for seniors are all examples of programs that will open your doors to people that ordinarily wouldn't be there. Also, keep in mind that they are all additional revenue streams that can add up to make a huge difference in your gross income at the end of the year.

The beauty of diversification is that it allows instructors to teach their traditional martial arts program without compromise. Those students who really don't want to make a commitment to earning a black belt will have the option of taking classes that are more in line with their goals. The key is that they'll still be paying the school tuition and adding to the energy of its atmosphere. The alternative is to not offer a variety of classes and risk having these students go elsewhere to get what they want.

3. Learn To Delegate

Many of the school owners that I speak with claim they are working harder and harder these days just to maintain their status quo. They wonder why they are investing more hours but getting a lower return. I believe that's partly because they are focussing the majority of their energy in the wrong places. As a result, they end up jogging in place, spinning their wheels and go nowhere in a hurry.

The best way for them to fix this problem is to begin delegating certain tasks to other people or organizations that can do those task as good, if not better than they can. As you'll see, delegating is indeed a critical growth factor.

A great example of wasted time is when school owners take the time to try to design their own advertisements. Being a black belt does not qualify someone as a marketing expert. This where a program like NAPMA can save a school owner a lot of time and money. NAPMA has marketing experts design the school's ads, posters and newsletters each month. Not only do they look much better, when they're designed by experts, but they sure work a lot better too.



The preschool age market is very hot right now and schools should have age specific preschool programs.

Having all of these key tasks done for you by experts frees up instructors so they can do more of what they do best—teach classes! To pass up all of this and continue to do it all yourself would be antiproductive.

Another perfect example of delegating is to find a good billing company to collect your students' tuition. Most school owners I speak with don't know the first thing about accounting or how to organize their collection efforts. It's best to leave tuition collection up to the professionals. Let them have the headaches while you wait for the reports and checks to arrive in the mail. Besides, most instructors are softies when it comes to collecting money from students. I've been there myself. It's hard to play the dual role of "good sensei" one minute and "evil bill collector" the next.

Each issue of *Martial Arts Professional* contains numerous advertisements for tuition billing companies. When selecting one, I recommend shopping around. Call each of them, request an information packet and pick the one that suits your needs the best.

Each of the aforementioned ideas have led other schools to massive growth. As a result, their level of income changed—and so did their lives. When implemented, these strategies will give you more time to spend teaching and focusing on the priority areas of growing your business. Let's hit it hard in 1998! ■

A third degree black belt and former program director and chief instructor. Rob Colasanti was recently promoted to the position of Vice President of NAPMA.

Some people get very defensive if they miss an issue of Martial Arts Professional



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MASTER'S DEGREE

instructions for instructors

by Tom Callos

what's the biggest room in the world?

Hang around New York/Florida instructor and school owner Steve LaValee for very long, and you're bound to hear him say, "The biggest room in the world is—the room for improvement." It's one of his favorite sayings, and it's probably the reason his schools have been setting performance records for so many years.

LaValee truly is, and pardon the tired cliche, "On a quest to be his best." I can't count the number of times in seminars that I've seen Steve taking notes like a new program director. He sits at the back of the room (usually next to me while I'm trying to catch 40-winks) and takes copious notes on even the most tiring subjects. On more than one occasion he's made me feel so guilty about not paying attention that I've gotten my own note pad out and followed suit.

"From my experience, I've often been impressed with just how relaxed most other non-martial arts teachers are when they teach."

This month's column is a rewrite of my notes from just such an occasion. And as I recall, I missed my afternoon nap because of it. But on the positive side, I didn't feel any LaValee-induced guilt—and I actually learned a thing or two. Here's the condensed version for you. No note pad required.

Four Things To Do Now To Improve The Quality Of Your School's Instructors

1. Start an Instructor Training/Idea Session in the last five to ten minutes of your advanced student and leadership team classes. In addition to that, design a three-week Instructor's Training Course that covers the basics of teaching. Make your training-course classes short and sweet (no marathon training sessions, if you want to keep fresh faces in your instructor's pool).

In your three-week session, you cover the simple basics—like smiling and proper tone of voice, eye contact and hands-on teaching. Everyone must bring a notebook to your classes—for improved retention—and class should be 40% lecture and 60% practice.

2. Video tape a couple of nights worth of classes for review at your next staff meeting and/or Instructor Training Sessions (Suggestion: Have a parent tape the class without telling your staff your intentions—that way, your instructors are less likely to alter their normal behavior). Prior to showing the tape to your staff, you should preview it yourself and make notes of the good and the not-so-good—then be prepared to talk about what you would like to see in the future. Keep 70% of your feedback focused on positive praise for what went right, and 30% on constructive feedback.

Your instructors will likely gain a whole new perspective on their teaching when they watch themselves doing it from a distance.

3. Go on a field trip. Take your staff to visit some other types of classrooms. The way that dance, gymnastics, P.E. (Physical Education) and ballet teachers handle their students can provide valuable ideas to your instructors. From my experience, I've often been impressed with just how relaxed most other non-martial-arts teachers are when they teach.

4. Design "Student-Feedback" forms for students and their parents to fill out after each class. And rather than ask for comments, make it a "multiple choice" function. Make sure that the form is designed to give positive feedback, rather than a forum to offer gripes. Then use the feedback you get to emphasize the positive and generate solutions for the less-than-positive choices.

Use the "Student-Feedback" forms just one week out of each month to increase their effectiveness. You might want to call it Instructor Review Week?

Another Steve Lavalee-ism is, "Feedback is the Breakfast of Champions." As for me, I love feedback, especially when it's presented in a constructive and positive manner. Make sure your Instructor Training Sessions don't become lectures on what's wrong in your classroom. Instead, make them fun and positive skill-building sessions that instructors and would-be-instructors enjoy coming to.

Good Luck, and as you-know-who would say, TAKE ACTION, NOW! ■

Tom Callos is a school owner in Hilo, HI, a NAPMA video instructor, and a

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SAVED BY THE BELL

the great debate: how much to charge for classes?

By Rick Bell

I recently wrote an article for "MAPro" that apparently touched a nerve with many instructors in this field. The article was about the price a school should charge for lessons.

The subject of how much a professional martial arts instructor should charge students for lessons seems to completely polarize this industry, with about half of the readers I've spoken to completely in favor of fair pricing for profit, and the other half claiming that making a profit in a martial arts school borders on criminal behavior.

"The desire of every instructor I've spoken with through the years has been to see the profession of teaching martial arts gain the respect it deserves."

Upper-market price-positioning is a fundamental business principle that other industries understand and embrace. Every successful business owner in America knows he needed to charge a fair market price for his service, not only to make a good profit, but also to keep up with inflation and to stay ahead of the ever increasing cost of doing business.

It's shocking to see how much rent has gone up in the last several years, not to mention insurance, taxes, advertising, utilities, and everything else that affects your business. These ongoing cost increases are a way of life, but they are often ignored by school owners who are determined to keep their lesson prices at the same levels they were five, or even ten years ago. These instructors are fine people with good intentions and pure motives, but they fail to recognize the financial repercussions of underpricing their service while they are responsible to a landlord and other creditors.

The desire of *every* instructor I've spoken with through the years has been to see the profession of teaching martial arts gain the respect it deserves. I believe that underpricing in the martial arts industry probably has as much to do with our failure to go "mainstream" as any other reason.

There is a negative chain reaction that occurs when an instructor refuses to operate his/her school as a business, and the results take their toll on all of us. There are many hard-working martial artists around the country who are stereotyped as poor business people and high credit risks because of the refusal of a few to accept financial reality. In reality, the following three things will eventually happen to an underpriced school. See if any of this sounds familiar:

1. The instructor begins to get discouraged because the school becomes a financial drain on his or her family. The spouse, who was loving and supportive in the beginning, now questions the very existence of the school. The real truth is, the only way the instructor got the spouse to go along with the idea of opening a school in the first place is by promising that it would provide extra income for the family. When the school does not produce income, the spouse becomes a major proponent for the closing of the school.

2. When a martial arts school closes, the event does not go unnoticed. People in the community see a closing school as an indication that nobody wants to take martial arts lessons. Have you ever noticed that crowded restaurants attract more people than empty ones? I refer to this phenomenon as the "follow the pack" syndrome. If people think everyone else wants to learn martial arts, they will also want to learn, but if they continually see schools opening and closing, they are not likely to have much motivation to join.



3. Being part of an industry with such a high business failure rate is terrible for your credit worthiness. If you don't believe me, just try and get a business loan listing "martial arts instruction" as your type of business on the application.

When a school closes, it does so for one reason and one reason only: It failed to make a profit. Profitable businesses do not close, they are sold when the owner wants out. If you can't sell your martial arts school, it's because your school is not profitable enough. There is always an abundance of people wanting to buy profitable businesses.

I've seen too many good martial artists become disillusioned with teaching when they must subsidize the school out of their own pocket each month because it has never developed as a business. It's time to take a hard look at what we are really worth as an industry, and if we are as valuable as we have always claimed, it's time to either put up. . .or shut up. ■

Rick Bell is a well-known speaker and consultant to the martial arts industry and is President of EasyPay Automated Billing. He can be reached at 1-800-852-4005 or IFCEasy@aol.com.



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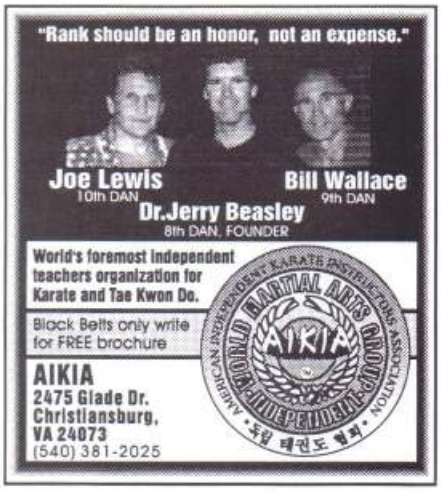
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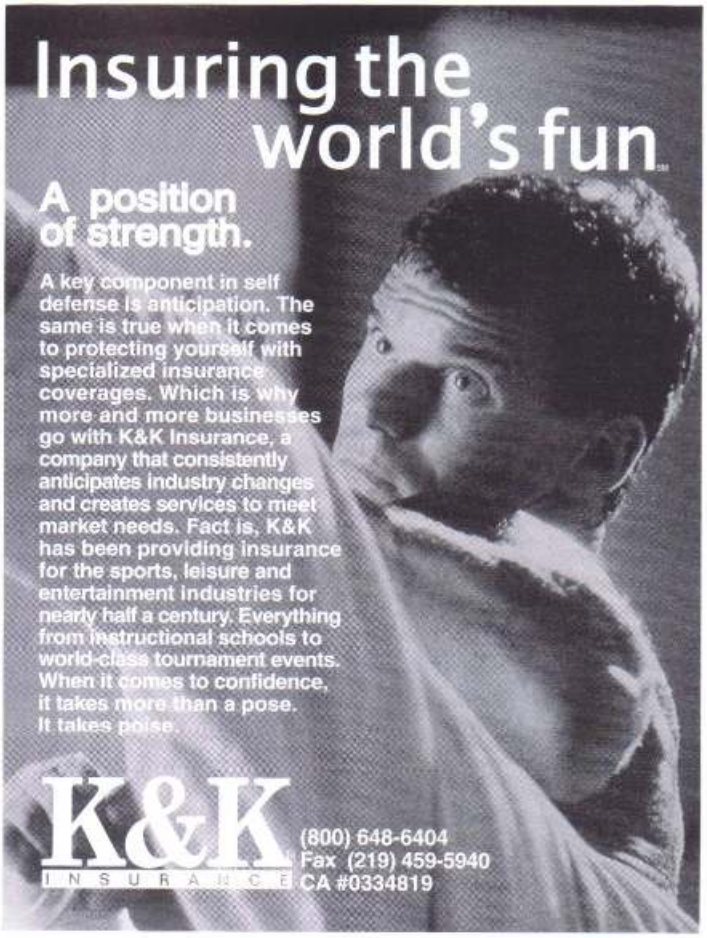
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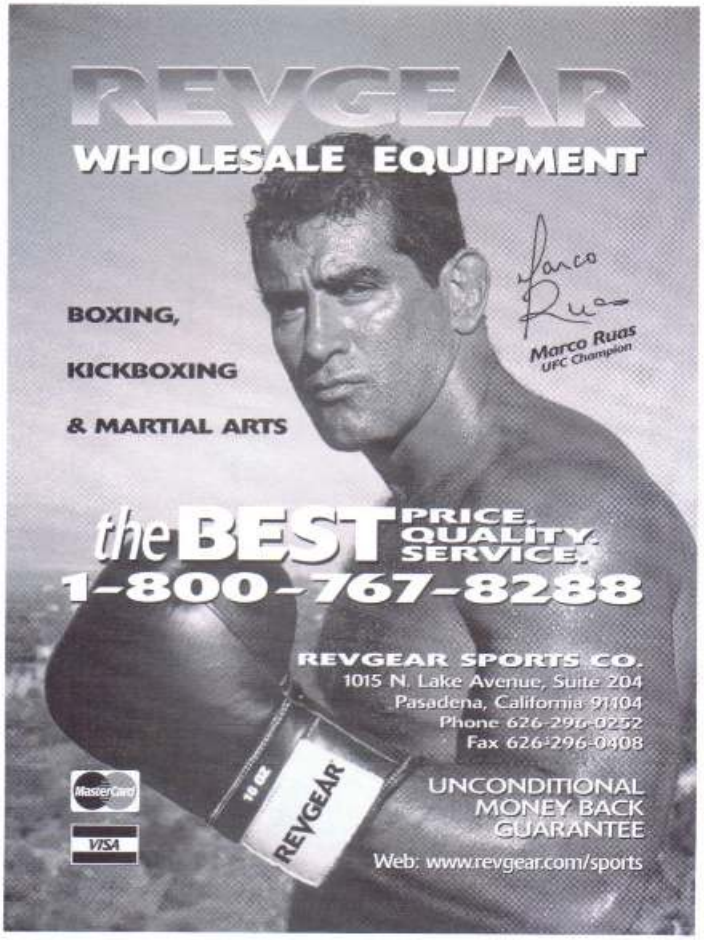
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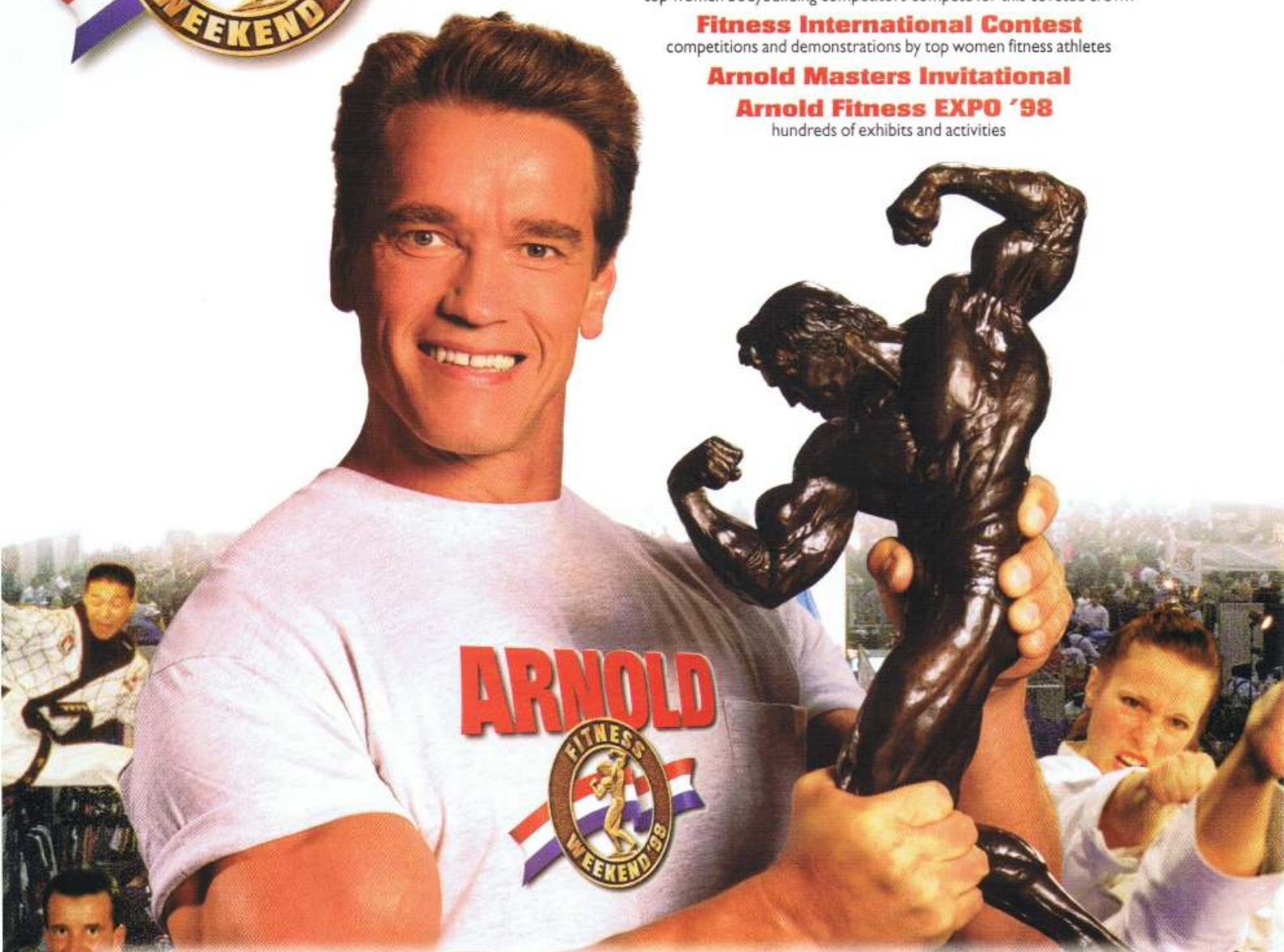
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